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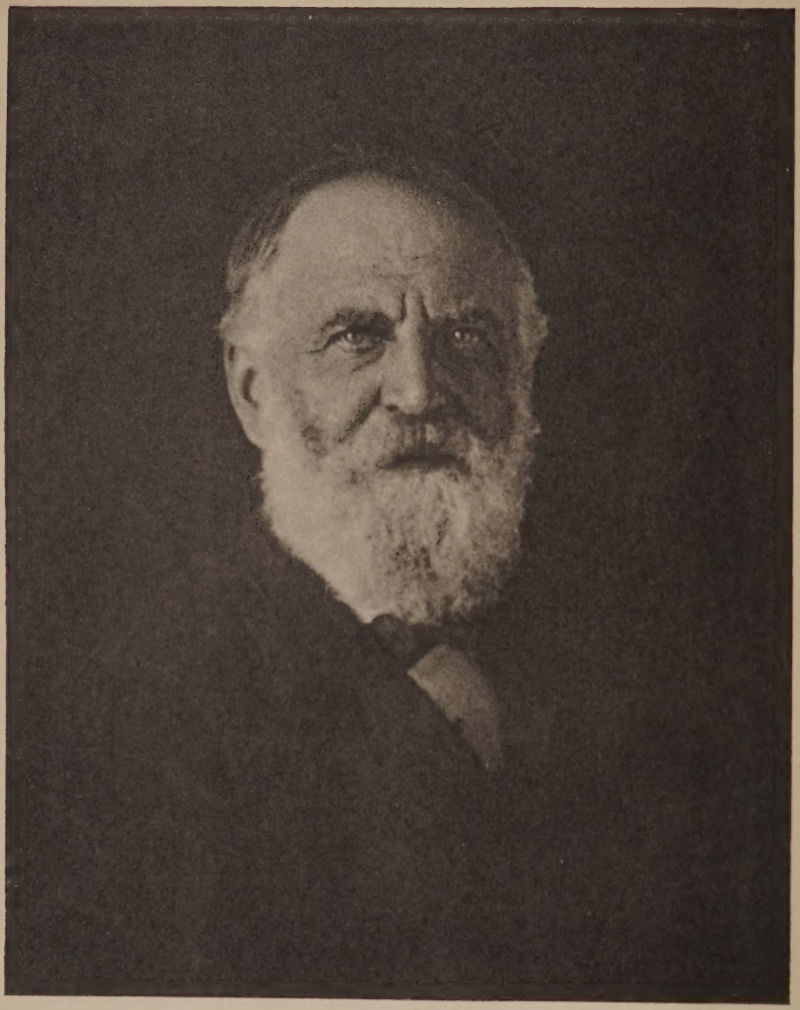

W. T. Stead in 1911

# THE LIFE OF W. T. STEAD

BY

FREDERIC WHYTE

IN TWO VOLUMES

Vol. II

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# CHAPTER 17

## SOME *REVIEW OF REVIEWS* LETTER-BOOKS, 1890–1891

'. . . the credit of using letters as a main constituent of biography . . . has been given, as far as English is concerned, to Mason. . . . Boswell did Mason honour by acknowledging his example, and much more by following it, . . . the plan has always been followed since: and there can be no question that, with a little favour of circumstances, it is the best possible. You get, as has been said, your character at first hand; if the letters include epistles to, as well as from, him (or her), you get invaluable sidelights; you get, in cases of wilful deception or great carelessness, the most trustworthy accounts of fact; and you can, or ought to be able to, hear the man talking.'
– Professor GEORGE SAINTSBURY in *A Letter Book*.

### I

### 'ACCOUNTS OF FACT'

ONE is safe, probably, in saying that Stead must have been among the most prolific letter-writers ever known. Copies of some seventy or eighty thousand letters which he dictated during the *Review of Reviews* period of his career, as well as of a good many hundreds written with his own hand, have been preserved, and only a small proportion of them could be dismissed as mere letters of business. Not all of them are legible, indeed, for the old-fashioned copying-books required great care and patience in their manipulation, and Stead's own restless, eager temperament was not conducive to very careful or patient methods on the part of his assistants; nor did he take any pleasure in re-reading his own words. He was glad to have a record of them for practical purposes, but if accidents happened – if the folios were damped too little or too much, or if insufficient force was applied to the screw of the copying-press – he does not seem to have worried. His freedom from the vanity of authorship is almost painfully apparent in this connection. A large number of the copies are quite beyond deciphering.

Even two-score thousand letters, however – and the legible letters of a personal nature must number at least that – are an *embarras des richesses* to a biographer, especially when they touch upon a thousand

distinct topics and are addressed to more than five thousand different persons.

I have looked over all the volumes, but I should become bewildered were I to try to follow through their pages all the interwoven threads of Stead's countless interests. Putting on one side the great bulk of these books for occasional reference, let us be content to examine with some care the first half-dozen or so, covering the years 1890–1. They will enable us to study Stead's characteristics as a letter-writer. They will portray for us Stead, the man, at a transitional stage of his life. And they will help us to take stock of some of his principal friendships and preoccupations, old and new.

His outstanding preoccupation, of course, is the *Review of Reviews* itself – his watch-tower and tribune in one. Then come: the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau; *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, the famous book which Stead had helped General Booth to write; a character-sketch of the Prince of Wales; Parnell's divorce-case and downfall; the Parliamentary candidature of Sir Charles Dilke; the Mattei cures for cancer and other maladies; the personal affairs of his friends and of the unknown correspondents who sought advice and assistance; and, last but not least, those *Real Ghost Stories* through the compiling of which he was to become, bit by bit, a devotee of Spiritualism and the Occult.

The first of the copying-books opens with a letter, in Stead's own handwriting and couched in terms of strenuous reproach, to Mr. John Burns. It is dated March 10, 1890. Mr. Burns, made indignant by stories of the horrors of Siberian convict life, has been reported, it seems, to have used language amounting to an incitement to the assassination of the Tsar – the Tsar Alexander, whom Stead for years past has been extolling as the Peace-Keeper of Europe! Stead's view of all such Russian troubles will be remembered. The Tsar, in a position of unparalleled difficulty, could be counted upon to do his best. No greater disaster to the world could be conceived than his assassination. In his efforts to remedy the evils of the hour, Alexander III was as honest and sincere as John Burns himself. 'I do hope,' the letter to Burns concludes, 'that you have been misrepresented!' . . . Is it not a characteristic beginning to the book? It is characteristic of the time, indeed, as well as of the man. Twenty years, even ten years, later, there would have been no written remonstrance

probably, but a sudden ringing up of a Battersea telephone number and a vehement altercation over the wire!

The second letter is in answer to Froude, who has been reading *The Pope and the New Era* – with 'wonder and amazement,' so he has said – and who wants to have a talk with Stead about it.

We may 'skip' the other letters in March, April, and May.

In June, 1890, Stead had paid his first visit to Ober-Ammergau and seen the Passion Play – the first dramatic performance he had ever witnessed. It had thrilled and moved him profoundly, and he had at once produced a book about it, profusely illustrated, which, while offending the susceptibilities of a good many people, was to infect some hundreds of thousands with his own emotions. It was so useful as a practical guide and text-book that some of those who bought it and valued it in this respect wrote to Stead to urge him in subsequent editions to modify the pages in which he applied the moral of the play to our every-day existence – blasphemous pages in their eyes. To one such critic Stead writes, thanking him heartily for his 'kind and generous tribute,' and declaring that he can quite understand the sentiment which prompts his 'frank and straightforward protest.' To himself, however, the reflections objected to are absolutely essential to the book and nothing could induce him to leave them out. 'They enable the Reader to understand how real the Passion comes to be to those who are living in the midst of the whirl of present politics.'

'I may have linked it on wrongly (he continues), but the great thing is to link it on. A man wrote to me shortly after the book appeared, saying he had never before realized that the people in the Gospel were actuated by just the same feelings that move us in our daily life. It is worth a good deal to make people feel that. I admit that the effect on many will be to lead them to be more or less irritated with me, but this is as dust in the balance compared with the benefit of compelling them to ask whether or not it is possible that, while doing lip-homage to our Lord who was crucified many years ago, we are not crucifying Him afresh in our daily life and action.'

The letter-books for 1890 and 1891 are full of communications bearing upon the Passion Play book, which entailed much unlooked-for worry to Stead, for it resulted in a very troublesome and somewhat alarming law-suit. The first allusion to this is in a brief note to Dr. Walsh, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin – the Archbishop had gone

to see the Play. 'I posted a copy of the Passion Play,' Stead writes him, 'to Ober-Ammergau, where I hope you will receive it safely, in spite of the Jews, who have broken faith with me very badly and confiscated the book, alleging I produced the photographs so well that it would spoil their sale' – he means the sale of the originals – 'if the book were allowed to be sold freely on the spot.' The litigation eventually ended in Stead's favour, but the legal expenses were heavy and prevented the enterprise from proving a lucrative one.

Stead's exact share in the authorship of *Darkest England* has always been a matter of curiosity to readers of that unique work.[1] Here is Stead's own account, as given to three correspondents on different occasions – the first letter is dated November 1890:

'When General Booth began writing his book, his wife got worse. He wrote to me in despair asking, "Can you get me some literary 'hack' who will lick my material into shape and get the book out in time?" I said, "The importance of your work is such that I will gladly undertake any 'hack' work which you require." At first he demurred, but as I insisted that it would be a great privilege to help in getting out such a work, he consented, and I did the best I could – that is the simple fact.'

The second letter is in contradiction of the rumour that he had received £5,000 for writing the book – this, he says, is 'a lie.' In the first place, he had not written the book, he had only helped General Booth with it. 'In the second place, I have not received a penny-piece from the General for the help which I gladly rendered him.'

The third reference is in a long letter to Milner, now in Cairo, at the Ministry of Finance. It is a long and interesting letter, dated October 23, 1890, and begins thus:

'It is quite like old times. Last Saturday I had five hours' talk with John Morley, and now I have your excellent five minutes' discourse from Cairo. I am delighted with Morley, and I am delighted with you. I need not state, of course, as you know, I am perennially delighted with myself, the *Review of Reviews* and the prospect generally!'

[1] Mr. Harold Begbie in his life of General Booth makes some very interesting remarks on this subject.

Then, after allusions to several political problems of the moment, he proceeds:

'Now for another subject: It is like old times, not merely because of coming into friendly communication with you and Mr. Morley, but because of the new start that we are making in the question of Social Reform. You remember, of course, the first great *coup* which we made in the *Pall Mall Gazette* – The Bitter Cry of Outcast London. General Booth's Book may be regarded as a bigger and a better "Bitter Cry," and in order to make the apostolic succession quite clear I took care to incorporate in the first page the greater part of that famous Leader which began everything. I send you a copy of the book herewith. You will recognize my fine Roman hand in most of the chapters, and I shall be very curious to know what you think of it. You will be delighted to see that we have got the Salvation Army solid not only for Social Reform but also for Imperial Unity. I have written to Rhodes about it and we stand on the eve of great things.'

* * *

Of all the matters dealt with in the letter-books covering the year 1891 the character-sketch of the Prince of Wales is the one about which Stead writes with most zest and animation.[1] An interchange of remarks between him and Milner in the June and July of that year may serve as a pleasant preface to this episode. Stead had sent proofs of the article to personages of importance as well as to some of his close personal friends – among others to Sir F. Knollys, to Mr. Gladstone, to Morley, Brett,[2] and Milner. Milner, in returning his set with a good many criticisms and suggestions, had added the following PS.:

'*A propos* of the "me," you recollect the old saying – "Science was his *forte*, omniscience his failing." I could tamely but truly parody it of W. T. S. – "His ego is his *forte*, his egotism is the devil." '

Stead, writing on July 8, and sending Milner a revised proof, 'improved by all the alterations which you suggested and more besides,' answers this criticism – it has helped him, he says, to understand how so many people come to impute 'egotism' to him:

[1] Further reference to this character-sketch will be found in Chapter 22.
[2] Afterwards Lord Esher.

'The remark which you said was "really too awful" was really due to my exceeding humility. I always feel, when I am writing anything, that my Reader has a right to say, "But what the mischief makes you think that there is anything in this?" So I tell him quite frankly, as I would tell you in conversation. If I make a mystery about it and wrap it up I do not treat my Reader with the frankness that is desirable. You see, anyone who takes a pen and writes that which another man reads must do one of two things – he can either treat his Reader exactly as he would a friend to whom he is talking, or he can, more or less, get upon stilts and make phrases. Now, I do not make phrases and I do not see why for the life of me it should be regarded as egoistic for me to write what you admit would not be objectionable if it were a phrase used in conversation. It is not because I think that it is of any great use to anyone, excepting to those who are reading what I am writing, to know why I came to a certain conclusion, or what prompted the writing of this particular article. Those who take the trouble to read what I write may naturally demand from me an explanation as to why I take this, that or the other line. If I tell them, it is because I am anxious not to presume but wish to let them understand exactly what was the value of the suggestion which set me in motion.'

He goes on to say that he fears that 'the desire to explain things in this humble modest manner' will abide with him, now that he no longer has Milner, as in the old *P.M.G.* days, by his side to revise his writings and make them 'presentable.'

The first important letter about the character-sketch in question is one addressed by Stead to Sir Francis Knollys on June 29, 1891, in reply to one in which Sir Francis, after reading the proofs sent him of the article, has stigmatized it as 'most unfair, unjust and inaccurate,' and has definitely contradicted one remark in it regarding the Prince's debts. 'I gladly accept the correction about the debts,' Stead writes. 'Your statement will come with a very pleasant surprise to most people.'

As to Sir Francis's strong condemnation of the tone of the article generally, Stead intimates some surprise, for in the course of an interview with Sir Francis he had spoken more plainly than he had written, and Sir Francis had not then taken so uncompromising a line; he had promised to think the matter over and communicate with

Stead presently. Would he not now be so good as to say categorically what passages in the article were incorrect? He (Stead) has made an honest attempt to tell the truth. If Sir Francis can convince him that what has been written is 'unjust, uncharitable or inaccurate,' he is prepared to 'alter it from the beginning to the end.' He adds that Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, who has seen the proof, has hotly attacked him for what he considers 'a shameless whitewashing of the Prince.'

Sir Francis Knollys acceded to this appeal, as we may see from a letter which Stead wrote to Mr. Brett on July 2, enclosing a revised version of the article. Mr. Brett himself had taken a favourable view of the first draft:

'Your letter was a great comfort to me, for I was afraid you would think me much too hard. I have taken to heart all that you said about the parallel between H. R. H. and W. T. S.[1] I think you will be amused to see the new and amended version.

'I went round to see Knollys, had two hours with him and got on with him very well. I said to him:

'"How will the Princess regard this?"

'He said, "She will be very indignant."

'I said, "I do not wish one word which the Princess will regard as unjust to be said. I will take my article away and go through it from that point of view."

'He said, "I must tell you, to be frank with you, that I submitted your article to Sir Dighton Probyn and he does not think that the article is so bad, but I differ from Probyn."

'Of course Probyn's approval of the article was a very strong point in my favour, and against toning it down too much, but I turned to and set to work at my curious task, and the net result corresponds much more closely to the aim that I set before myself at the beginning.

'W. E. G. is profoundly troubled about it; he has written me two more letters. Mr. Morley has also written to say that W. E. G. thinks the article may produce a convulsion! I sent him the revised version last night and hope that he will be satisfied.

'Knollys was very pleased with it; said he thought it was much juster than before.'

[1] Mr. Brett had reminded him that he himself (Stead) was often the victim of calumnious reports.

Sir Morell Mackenzie, then in close attendance on the Prince, had gone so far as to express 'delight' with the article in its amended form, and Mr. Lewis, the Solicitor (not yet Sir George) had also given it his *imprimatur*. What was more wonderful, however, to Stead was that all his 'fighting Nonconformists,' with the exception of Hugh Price Hughes, were 'in ecstasies' over it.

We shall glance at the article itself in a subsequent chapter. Two more allusions to it will suffice here – the first is from another letter to Milner, dated July 27:

'The article on the Prince of Wales has been accepted almost universally as whitewash, pure and simple. Some very funny things have happened in relation to it; among others, an American leader of society, a lady from Chicago, called upon me to ask me to use my influence with my high friend, the Prince of Wales, as she understood that I had conferred a great favour upon him lately! I smiled. On the whole, the impression produced by the article seems to be good and I am encouraged.'

The second, dated August 17, is to Mr. Gladstone – one would have liked to hear his comment!

'You will be glad to know that the net effect of the publication of the article on the Prince of Wales has been the exact opposite of that which was anticipated by almost everyone who read the article before it appeared. The Marlborough House people are delighted, I am informed, and I am abused throughout the Press of the world as a shameless whitewasher of His Royal Highness.'

* * *

The amount of time and energy and feeling which Stead put into his campaign against Parnell after the disastrous divorce-case, and into his half-dozen campaigns against Sir Charles Dilke, is really extraordinary. The unrelenting persistence which marked his attacks on these two men alienated some of his most valued friends and was a source of surprise and regret to many others. 'How is it that that great heart of yours cannot be a little more merciful to Dilke and Parnell?' Olive Schreiner wrote him from South Africa in March, 1891, 'The glory of your nature is its *width*. All people seem so narrowly limited in their sympathies, not you: therefore I hate to see a limitation in you anywhere. I believe you to be the most loyal

friend I know. I would thou wertest also the most magnanimous enemy.'

The onslaughts on Dilke had begun in 1886, and they were revived in 1891 and 1892 on Dilke's reappearance as a Parliamentary candidate. Hundreds of pages of these early letter-books are taken up with explanations and defences of Stead's attitude towards Dilke. The whole matter is of intense interest to the student of human nature, but both Stead and Dilke are dead and the less written about it the better. Readers who hear it declared – as it is often declared – that Stead was actuated by mere spite or jealousy, or some such contemptible personal feeling, may be urged to examine for themselves the pamphlet entitled *Deliverance or Doom*, in which he summed up for the last time all that he had had to say on the subject. It is not free from faults of taste, but it is the work of a single-minded man, in deadly earnest. 'Is there, or is there not, any answer to this indictment?' he wrote on February 3, 1892, to one of Dilke's warmest supporters. This summing up against Dilke is at the same time Stead's own defence.

The tragedy of Parnell is in quite another category. It belongs both to English and Irish history, and the accounts of it in the official Lives of Parnell and Gladstone are incomplete without some record of Stead's share in it. This, I think, has been misunderstood by Parnell's biographer, Barry O'Brien. Lord Morley ignores it almost altogether.

Let us refresh our memories of the affair. On November 17, 1890, judgment was given against Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell in the divorce suit brought against them by Captain O'Shea, M.P. for Galway, the constituency which had elected him at Parnell's own bidding, in the face of strong opposition by several leading members of the Irish Nationalist Party. With O'Shea's negligible personality we need not concern ourselves – he was generally believed to have been a *mari complaisant*: in any case very little sympathy was wasted on him. Of Mrs. O'Shea herself it is enough to remember that she loved Parnell devotedly to the end and gave him much happiness.

It was known in Ireland that an English campaign against Parnell's continued leadership was to be expected, and Irish Members of Parliament, resenting the idea of this, were united at first in proclaiming their loyalty to him. At a National League meeting in

Dublin on November 18, Mr. Swift MacNeill and Mr. Donald Sullivan gave ardent expression to this feeling. Two days later a great assembly of Irish Nationalists and Liberals was held at Leinster Hall, Dublin, when the following resolution was proposed by Mr. Justin M'Carthy and carried with acclamation:

'That this meeting, interpreting the sentiment of the Irish people that no side-issue shall be permitted to obstruct the progress of the great cause of Home Rule for Ireland, declares that in all political matters Mr. Parnell possesses the confidence of the Irish nation, and that this meeting rejoices at the determination of the Irish Parliamentary Party to stand by their Leader.'

Was there the least reason to suppose that, because he might 'have gone wrong in some private question,' Parnell should fail 'in his duty to lead his people in some great question of national and public importance?' – these were the words used by Mr. Justin M'Carthy, the tranquil-minded, gentle-voiced historian and novelist, Parnell's most distinguished associate and perhaps the best loved man in the party. Its most truculent member, Mr. 'Tim' Healy, followed vigorously in the same sense. Were they to abandon their chief 'because of a temporary outcry over a case that in London would be forgotten to-morrow if there were a repetition of the Whitechapel murder?'

Many leading English Radicals also spoke up for Parnell's retention: Mr. Jacob Bright, for instance, in the *Manchester Guardian* on November 22, and Mr. Illingworth in a speech at Bradford on November 24. 'Mr. Parnell,' declared the latter, 'has piloted Home Rule nearly into its haven. Would the passengers on a vessel from America, which had been skilfully navigated through many storms, depose the Captain while yet the ship had to be threaded through the crowded sea and Mersey because they heard on the voyage that the Captain had been guilty of a moral offence?'

These utterances, and others of the same kind, are cited in the *Life of Parnell* by Mr. Barry O'Brien, who proceeds to say:

'Amid this chorus of friendly opinion three jarring notes were struck:

'1. By the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes in the *Methodist Times*.

'2. By Mr. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.[1]

'3. By Mr. Davitt in the *Labour World*.

[1] As a matter of fact, E. T. Cook was then editor of the *Pall Mall* and took the same line as Stead.

'All three took their stand on the moral question and said, in effect, Mr. Parnell must go.'

Here Mr. Barry O'Brien (quite unwittingly, I am sure) gave an altogether misleading impression of what really happened. The 'jarring note' of Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, with his foolish fling at the Irish generally as 'an obscene race,' was not to be thus bracketed with the entirely different tones of Stead and the famous Land Leaguer. Davitt, whose truthfulness and honour were beyond question, maintained that Parnell had solemnly assured him of his innocence. What concerned both Davitt and Stead much more than Parnell's adultery was all the deceit surrounding it – deceit amounting in their eyes to treachery alike to Irish colleagues and English supporters. Stead's public utterances made his view quite clear, and we find it expressed again repeatedly in his letters to Mr. Gladstone and to scores of other correspondents.[1] As it happens, Mr. Gladstone's own less intelligible attitude throws Stead's into strong relief.

In that wonderfully interesting chapter entitled 'Breach with Mr. Parnell,' in which he tells the whole story, Lord Morley quotes a significant letter from Mr. Gladstone, dated November 18, wherein agreement is expressed with the view of the Parnell divorce-case taken by the *Daily Telegraph* on the day before. The *Daily Telegraph*, in this article, while assuming that the effect of the trial must be to relegate 'Mr. Parnell for a time, at any rate, to private life,' implies its regret that 'a political adversary whose abilities and prowess it was impossible not to respect had been overthrown by an irrelevant accident, wholly unconnected with the struggle in which we are engaged.'

Mr. Gladstone's letter to Morley next day also deserves consideration here. He is ill at ease. He says again and again to himself, he tells Morley, – 'in the interior and silent forum' – 'It'll na dee'.' But, although 'it won't do,' Mr. Gladstone is of no mind to give a lead. He feels 'that we, the Liberal Party as a whole, and especially we, its leaders, have for the moment nothing to say to it, that we must be passive, wait and watch' – until the Irish, that is, have decided the question. 'I should not be surprised,' he proceeds, however, 'if there were rather painful manifestations in the House on Tuesday. It is yet to be seen what our Nonconformist friends, such a man as – , for instance, or such a man as – , will say.' And he goes on to make another

[1] See in this connection Stead's remarks about General Boulanger, on p. 113.

remark which helps to reveal his train of thought. 'If I recollect right, Southey's *Life of Nelson* was in my early days published and circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It would be curious to look back upon it and see how the biographer treats his narrative at the tender points.'

To Mr. Gladstone, therefore, if we are to judge from these two indications, Parnell's love-affair with Mrs. O'Shea was 'an irrelevant accident,' unconnected with the struggle for Home Rule, and to be classed morally with Nelson's infatuation for Lady Hamilton. *Now this is precisely the view that Stead at once set himself to combat.* In a vehement letter written by him to Mr. Gladstone on that same November 19 we find him declaring – if not in very elegant English or in very tactful terms, at least with blunt sincerity – 'I leave the question of adultery out of the matter. Let me regard that, if you please, as venial a fault as taking an extra glass of brandy.' *Not mere adultery*, he insists, *but adultery cloaked in duplicity*, is the real charge against Parnell.

'The man has proved himself a thorough-paced dissembler,' Stead warns Mr. Gladstone, and he thus points the moral: 'Every Liberal Candidate will be asked at the meetings – "Do you trust Mr. Parnell?" There is not one of us who dare reply that he does. This is not an affair of adultery, but an affair of confidence, and no one henceforth can evermore have confidence in Parnell.'

Next day, November 20, in a second letter, he drives this point in: 'I know my Nonconformists well, and no power on earth will induce them to follow that man to the poll, or you, either, if you are arm-in-arm with him.'

He is so sure of this, he repeats, in a third letter five days later, that he has not troubled to send to the Nonconformist Ministers, any more than to the Liberal election agents, the pamphlet about Parnell which he is posting to 'every Catholic priest in Ireland, to all the Members of the House of Commons, and to all dignitaries of the Church of Rome.'

But Mr. Gladstone took little note of Stead's distinction between the 'adultery' and the 'duplicity.' What apparently weighed with him was the fact that rationally or irrationally, the great mass of English Liberals were dead against Parnell. On November 24, grieved and harassed, he sat down to pen the famous letter to Mr. Morley which sealed Parnell's fate.

* * *

The Mattei cures for cancer and other maladies proved one of the blindest of Stead's blind-alleys; but I imagine that few who were involved in that curious episode remember it with regret. Blind-alleys serve their own purpose, and to explore one in Stead's cheerful company must always have been an exhilarating experience – much pleasanter and in some ways much more profitable than a dull unchequered progress along the high road of conventional success.

One of the first allusions to the subject in the letter-books is a note to Miss Bella Stillman, daughter of the distinguished American journalist who was then *Times* correspondent in Rome, an old friend of Stead's: 'I am coming to see Count Mattei and will reach Bologna about the 3rd of November,' Stead writes to her on October 21, 1890, 'I shall not, however, be able to come to Rome.' A letter to Professor Tyndall, dated November 21, shows that Stead has made some progress. Professor Huxley, it seems, has laid down for him the lines on which an experimental Mattei Hospital might be founded, but first it is necessary to create some sort of 'competent and responsible tribunal' to which certain test cases could be submitted:

'You say there are scores of scientific men of "the profoundest knowledge and the soundest knowledge" (he continues) who would willingly give such cases their fullest consideration. I very much wish that you could give me a hint, if it be not too great a liberty to ask, as to where I may lay my hands upon, say, a couple of these gentlemen. At present those whom I have approached take refuge under various pretexts, the favourite being the plea that the remedies are secret and therefore not to be investigated.'

Stead preserved several letters written to him by Tyndall, who evidently had a real regard for him, but the Professor's answer to the above appeal is missing. Whether or not with his help, Stead succeeds presently in enlisting the collaboration of several physicians of note, including Lawson Tait, but it is too long a story for these pages – it can be followed in more detail in the early volumes of the *Review of Reviews*. Here I am concerned only with the sidelights on it – and on Stead himself – thrown by our letter-books. They contain any number of letters upon the subject, many of them defending the Count against his critics, sometimes rather sharply:

'With regard to the paragraph which you sent from the *British*

*Weekly*,' Stead writes to one correspondent, 'the analysis of Count Mattei's Cures is perfectly idiotic. You might as well dissect a corpse and, finding no soul under your scalpel, declare that man had not got a soul, as to (*sic*) argue that, because chemical analysis could discover nothing in Count Mattei's remedies, therefore there was nothing in them.

'This question is to be settled, not by chemical analysis, but by experience, and if you have a mind to cut two of your fingers and try to staunch the blood of one with pure water and the other with Count Mattei's "Blue Electricity," you would see in a moment the difference between the two. The "electricity" will stop the bleeding instantly; the water will do nothing.'

In a letter written in January 1891, to another doubter, Stead defines his attitude towards the orthodox medical faculty. Few men have a nobler opportunity for doing good, he acknowledges, than a really good doctor, but what he objects to is 'the arrogant intolerance of the ordinary professional man' towards the heterodox. Personally, he is always on the side of the heterodox, believing, with Dr. Theodore Parker, that any man not orthodox may be inspired. Above all, he distrusts the Doctor on the Policeman's back, – that 'perilous position from which we have dislodged the Priest!'

On the 21st of the month following, he has another fling at his pet aversions. 'I think the orthodox are children of the devil,' he writes to a Bradford correspondent, 'especially in medicine – at least whenever they set up their orthodoxy as if it were an end in itself, making an idol of it . . . I value the Mattei business chiefly because it gives me the opportunity of scourging these gentry, and if it turns up trumps it will do more to break the back of that arrogant pharisaical intolerance of theirs than anything else that has cropped up for a long time.'

Unluckily it did *not* turn up trumps!

## II

### 'SIDELIGHTS'

That delightful little volume of Professor Saintsbury's, *A Letter Book*, has provided me already with a text for this chapter. There are many sayings in it which come back inevitably to the mind as

one pursues this examination of Stead's very different Letter-Books. Hitherto the extracts given from them have been chosen for the most part as records at first hand of noteworthy episodes. Those which I shall proceed to give will serve even better – in Professor Saintsbury's own words – as 'tell-tales of character,' if not as 'examples of art.'

It may be as well to admit at the outset – what I think will be admitted by all save idolatrous admirers – that there is little or no art in Stead's letter-writing. He wrote – or dictated – any number of admirable letters, interesting, stimulating, sympathetic, warm-hearted, helpful, brave; they have all kinds of merits, including the one which Professor Saintsbury considers most essential of all; you can hear the 'spoken word' in them. But they may be searched in vain for the other characteristics which most appeal to the anthologist. Whether written or dictated, Stead's letters give us the spoken word, pure and simple, 'not subtly differentiated,' as the Professor would have it; and they lack even those touches of oratorical genius which so often lent force to his printed writings; they are as fluent and copious as his ordinary talk; one feels that he is never at a loss for a word. The letter-writers included in Professor Saintsbury's selection are self-conscious artists, almost all of them, relishing to the full their own wit and charm and grace and ingenuity – their carefully wrought conceits and premeditated surprises. There is next to nothing of all this about Stead. His pen is seldom a plaything to him. He enjoys a good phrase when it comes along, but he is so absorbed in the matter of his discourse that mere manner is of no interest to him. His is a natural, simple and unaffected speech of the kind which Montaigne said he loved, 'so written as it is spoken, and such upon the paper as it is in the mouth: a pithie, sinnovie, full, strong, compendious and material speech, not so delicate and affected as vehement and piercing.'[1]

Rhodes, of course, bulks largely in these letter-books. Several of the letters written to Rhodes himself are concerned with a *protégé* of his, named Palk – a young sailor whose intelligence and good manners had attracted the great man's attention on his latest voyage to the Cape, and whom he had sent to London in 1891 to be educated under Stead's friendly supervision. Rhodes proposed to employ him as soon as he knew shorthand and was able to write an official letter.

[1] Florio's translation.

'I always pick my people by instinct,' Rhodes explained to Stead: 'I think I am right in this case. I do not want a clever man, I want a loyal one. His face tells me that he will be loyal.' The experiment proved a complete success, to judge from a bundle of very grateful letters written to Stead later by the youth in question, some of them from Cape Town, where in 1893 he entered Rhodes's service as a kind of confidential secretary. 'Accept my most sincere thanks for your book on Mr. Rhodes,' Mr. Palk writes nine years later, in July, 1902, 'I shall always value it as being compiled by our greatest Editor on our greatest Englishman.'

Two other commissions which Stead executed for Rhodes in 1891 were: (1) the choosing and buying of one hundred pounds' worth of books; and (2) the collecting of the best available printed evidence on certain points connected with the Franchise. A passage from Rhodes's letter asking for this reflects the intimate relations now existing between the two men. I give it as it stands, without any punctuation:

'I can see you saying I like the impudence of the fellow with all my own work not having any consideration but bothering me with his own as well but I have that impudence for you have I believe a soft corner for all my burdens.'

There is a very interesting allusion to Rhodes in a letter to Milner, dated March 15, 1891. Stead assumes that, living as he is at Cairo, Milner has not heard much about the Cape Colossus, whose personality at this time is only beginning to be known in London. Rhodes is a 'man of immense power,' he writes, 'with immense wealth and with ideas as wide as the world. He reminds me of an Elizabethan statesman born out of time, and my prediction is that he will either make the Empire or mar it, if he lives for ten years more.' He proceeds:

'He is a man who has a good deal of the character of the men of the *Mayflower*, without their theological development. . . . He believes to the full in the famous resolution that was said to have been passed by the Pilgrim Fathers, to wit: "It is written, 'The earth and the fulness thereof is the Lord's, and He has given it to His Saints for an inheritance.' Voted unanimously – We are the Saints; and Decided, that we go in and possess it. . . ." His aspiration for the painting of

the map red is sufficiently fervent to satisfy even you. He sticks by Parnell and dined with Dilke. All the same he continues fast friends with me. He is very fond of Brett and likes Arthur Balfour, thinking the latter the best man we have after Salisbury. He riles Mr. Gladstone by telling him bluntly that his scheme of Home Rule made Ireland a taxed Republic without representation, that is to say a State every citizen of which would be bound to use the whole of his political influence in favour of complete separation. Mr. Gladstone jumped when Rhodes said this as if he had suddenly sat down on the business end of a tack, but we are all delighted that he should have had the truth so plainly stated to him for once.'

Stead was fond of holding up Rhodes as a sort of bogey-man to the so-called Little Englanders, in season and out of season. Here is an example in a letter to Mr. Morley – it comes as a climax to an impassioned harangue upon England's true policy regarding America, which was read, one feels sure, with raised eyebrows:

'Rhodes is a great Englishman, but I am by no means sure that, if we disregard his impassioned entreaties to impose some kind of differential duties on goods coming into the Empire from without, he may not be disposed to contemplate an arrangement with the American Republic. I feel as if the centre of the English-speaking world were shifting westward, and I feel this so strongly that, in discussing the question of the *Review of Reviews* with Dr. Albert Shaw, I specially reserved to myself the right to transfer the Central Office of the *Review of Reviews* from London to New York in case it should prove that the whole of the English-speaking race was destined to federate under the Stars and Stripes rather than under the Union Jack.'

Rhodes's character and career are an especially favourite topic in Stead's correspondence with Olive Schreiner, to whom some of his longest and most gossipy letters are addressed, and whose answers have been preserved. The actual using of a pen was quite a laborious, almost painful, operation for Miss Schreiner, as she then was: so she tells Stead, and her awkward, scrawly handwriting seems to attest as much; but many of her letters are of great length. Some of them are most interesting. Here, for instance, in a letter from Matjesfontein, is an account of a dream about Rhodes:

'I can tell you a story which will tend to prove to you how rotten are your ghost and dream theories! Some time ago (it was the night when the mail train passes here – I knew Rhodes was in it), I woke up in the middle of the night and found myself standing on the floor in the middle of my room, crying and wringing my hands. I'd dreamt that I saw Rhodes walking by with his old big felt hat on, drawn down very low on his head, and an overcoat on with the collar turned up and his head sunk very low between his shoulders. I ran up to him and stood before him. He did not speak a word, but he opened his overcoat and as he turned it back I saw his whole throat and chest covered with blood and his face ghastly pale like a dead person's; he said nothing, and it was at this point I woke.

'For some moments I walked up and down the room, half-awake, believing it was true. Then I heard the mail train move away, and I awoke fully and realized it was a dream.'

Shortly afterwards, with the effect of this still strong on her mind, she was walking in Cape Town:

'My brother Will (she continues) came up to me and asked me if I had heard any news. I said, "No." He said, "Then, come to my office – I want to tell you something." I asked him what it was and he said, "Some one you know has met with an accident." I at once said, "Oh, don't tell me, I know what it is." He asked me what I thought it was and I said, "Rhodes has been thrown from his horse and is dead." '

Rhodes, as a matter of fact, had met with an accident that very day, but without any very serious results. Had he died, Olive Schreiner declares, Stead and all his fellow-spiritualists would have exclaimed, 'How wonderful! How prophetic!'

'Now write me a letter (she says in conclusion). This is the longest letter I've written anyone for a year. Your letters always are to me a refreshing breath from the old outer world. Life in South Africa is very solitary for a woman. It may be good for one's work, but there are times when one longs to rub one's brains up against another human's. There are plenty of women and children and niggers to love here, but sometimes one wants the other side of one's nature satisfied, that *thinks*. I am going to spend the winter at a farm in the Karroo where I wrote *An African Farm* so many years ago. Just now I am

busy taking care of a woman who is going to have a child next month. Having a child seems always to me the one compensation the Gods give woman for being woman. The only thing that makes me sad in thinking I shall have to live all my life alone is the thought I shall never have a child.'

Stead, in his answer, dated April 25, 1892, begins with a spirited defence of Spiritualism – 'there is nothing else,' he declares, 'of such absorbing fascination.' He then proceeds:

'I was immensely interested in your story about your vision of Rhodes's accident, but, my dear illogical friend, cannot you see that your vision was much more remarkable, and a much greater confirmation of my ghost theories, because Rhodes was not killed than if he had been killed? You foresaw, several days, the accident that actually happened. I asked Rhodes, who was here the other day, whether he was wearing a big slouch hat at the time. He said he was. He does not know how he was picked up, but Merriman said that he was manifestly not dead, but living. When you saw him in the vision your premonitory sight was more exactly accurate than it would have been if he had really died. And yet you produce this as a proof that my ghost theories are absurd! The fact is that you, and the whole of your family, belong to the Clairvoyant race, and I wish instead of scoffing at them you would cultivate your powers. However, each one has his own road to ply in the world and as you do not interfere with mine, neither do I interfere with yours.'

The following passages from this letter, a very long one, are also worthy of transcription here, I think:

'I shall be very interested in reading your book on the Sex Question. I believe entirely with you as to the duty of dealing lovingly and sympathetically with those who are on a lower plane of development than what we have happily attained. But if we were to carry the same principle out elsewhere, and to regard the Law as an unnecessary ingredient in the affairs of human society, we should have Gladiatorial Shows established in London (as they used to be in Rome) at this moment. There is no kind of brutality that would not be permitted, either to inferior animals, or to weaker human beings, if your principle was carried out logically all along the line. What seems to me the weak place in your scheme of the universe is that you do not

allow Law any part to play; whereas, to very many, probably the majority of human beings, the Law, with its terrors – that is to say, the policeman and the jail, and, in cases of need, the beneficent lash, and the still more beneficent gallows – is the only thing that stands between them and the most unbridled savagery. It ought not to be necessary to teach a mother that she ought not to put her infant on a hot oven, or a father to break his little one's arm in a drunken passion, but, unfortunately, there are parents whose parental instincts are so rudimentary that they need to be stimulated by hard labour. As it is in relation to children, so it is in relation to the brutality and betrayal of women by men. In a case in which both parties are adults, and neither party violates any obligation to others, I do not say that – and have never said that – the Law should interfere, but where fraud, treachery, or force are employed in order permanently to impair the economic, social, and moral value of a human being, the Law can intervene, and ought to. I am very much more in favour of making cases of adultery, proved in open court, offences punishable by imprisonment than I used to be. Marriage, after all, is a contract, and a very solemn one, which carries with it the founding of the family, and the creation of new citizens, and a gross violation of the terms of the contract justifies society in affixing a penalty, not necessarily a vindictive one, but sufficient to attach a stigma to the evil-doer.

'The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, men and women always use the jail as a reinforcement of the purely ethical or moral arguments by which they persuade men to do right in all matters to which they attach a real importance. If people thought as seriously about a woman's life as they do about a £5 note, there would be no hesitation whatever in acting on my principles. Still, this is a question that had better be discussed face to face when we meet than argued about in cold type. . . .

'For the last ten days, we have been greatly thrilled by what seemed at one time the near prospect of the approach of my Half-penny Morning Newspaper. It is still possible that it may come to pass, but for the moment, it is overclouded. When that paper comes, I want to publish a story from day to day, in which the events of the previous day will serve as incident in the development of the plot. Mrs. Clifford[1] and I had a long discussion as to how that would be written,

[1] The well-known novelist, a great friend of Stead's.

and by whom. I do not see clearly at present, excepting that I shall have to map out the story, and indicate the incidents myself.

'Rhodes was very nice when he was here. He seemed none the worse for his accident, and we had three hours' talk. He was nice and kind too about poor Garrett, who is in Egypt. Rhodes asked me to tell him that, if his health required a South African residence, he should put himself aboard a steamer, and embark for Cape Town, where Rhodes would find him something to do, either journalistic work, or otherwise. It was very kind and thoughtful of Rhodes, and I am much attached to him.

'I note what you say concerning babies. I have a little Monkey of two years at the present moment in my house, and no one who has not lived with children knows how much they add to the joy and brightness of life. This little Monkey is not very friendly to me, but is idolized by the whole household. You see, I was not present when she was born, being in Rome at the time, and the little lady does not seem to have quite forgiven me for my absence on her advent.

'I have no end of things to say to you if you were here, but this letter is even longer than that which you were good enough to send me, so now I must close with best wishes for your welfare.

'Believe me,

'Your affectionate friend.'

Olive Schreiner's admiration for Rhodes in those early nineties, before she knew him personally, was one of the many bonds in common between her and Stead. 'The only big man we have here is Rhodes,' she had written in July, 1890, 'and the only big thing the Chartered Company. I feel a nervous, and almost painfully intense, interest in the man and his career. I am so afraid of his making a mistake, as he would do, I think, if he accepted the Prime Ministership of this Colony, as there is some talk of his doing. I don't see how he can play the hand of the Chartered Company and the hand of the Colony at the same time.' And in a letter dated March 15, 1891, we find her saying:

'I am glad you have made an alliance with Rhodes. I believe your genius is eminently fitted to harmonize with his. What you say of him is true, he seems to enlarge the horizon. How he has enlarged it in South Africa it would be impossible for you to judge unless you had known the South Africa of ten years ago. . . . Personally, I

believe Rhodes has the strongest antipathy to myself – his friends have told me so – but it does not in the slightest degree affect my sympathy with him and his work, any more than General Botha's objections to my work affect my feeling to him. It is the beauty of my standpoint that I am able to sympathize with, and love, so many people who will never be able to sympathize with, or love me. But I always shrink from meeting Rhodes as I would shrink from meeting General Botha.'

All this admiration, unfortunately, was to be lost in later years. After the Jameson Raid and during the Boer War Rhodes found one of his most implacable judges in Olive Schreiner. Her regard for Stead, which continued until the end, was intensified during those years of trouble in South Africa.

Another correspondent at a distance to whom Stead wrote long letters from time to time was Sir Robert Morier, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Here are some typical passages from one dated July 16, 1891:

'I am busy with a character-sketch of the German Emperor who has enormously interested all of us here. There is an element about that young man which reminds me of General Gordon, if you can imagine General Gordon born a Hohenzollern. Sir John Gorst finds him somewhat like Randolph Churchill. Mr. Balfour sees in him many points of resemblance to the first Napoleon. There is also, I think, a trace of Tim Healy in him. But I do not think he will last. That feverish excitement is not a good sign, and I do not see why he should keep up his feud with his mother. I have a prejudice in favour of mothers, having myself been born of one, a fact which, I am afraid, you think unduly colours the whole of my thinking.

'Lord Salisbury is doing very well, and has won the praise not merely of impartial and dispassionate observers like myself, but even of those unregenerate children of the Devil commonly known as Provincial Radical newspaper editors. I am in a state of incipient revolt against my party owing to the dire rumours which prevail that Sir William Harcourt intends to be Prime Minister when Mr. Gladstone is gathered to his fathers. As you know, I am a long-suffering creature, capable of standing much from my friends and associates, but Sir William Harcourt, – no, that is too much! Job himself would

have cursed God and died if he had seen such a portent on his dunghill....

. . . . . .

'P.P.S. I had an interesting talk with Mr. Bryce the other day, to whom I was expressing a loathing and detestation with which every true Briton regards Sir William Harcourt. Mr. Bryce said, "You are really too hard on Harcourt. It is not fair to say that he is entirely insincere. He is really sincere in some things." "Name, Name," I cried. Whereupon Bryce, all unconscious of the grim humour of his remark said, "I am quite sure that Sir William Harcourt is quite sincere in hating the Colonies." '[1]

Sir William Harcourt was Stead's 'pet aversion' in politics, and almost every reference to him in these letter-books – as in the *Review of Reviews* – is hostile, or at least censorious: it is a significant fact that Sir William was the one prominent politician whom he did not know personally. To an angry correspondent who has accused him of resorting to insinuations in these attacks and criticisms, Stead expresses himself freely. He regards Harcourt, he declares, as a man without faith, without enthusiasm, to whom politics are a mere game. He continues:

'I can understand a person differing from me *in toto* upon every one of those points – I cannot understand how anyone can possibly accuse me of not having uttered them myself fully and freely times without number. I entirely deny that I have ever employed any "cowardly innuendos" whatever. I have said about Sir William Harcourt in print exactly what I would say to his face if the opportunity offered, and I think I have a right to ask you what you mean by bringing such charges against me.

'With regard to your last question as to why I do not "revile" Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. John Morley, I am not in the habit of "reviling" a person whose earnestness and public spirit are beyond dispute.'

[1] In a letter to Cecil Rhodes dated May 6, 1892, we find Stead quoting a very similar comment by Mr. Balfour, but more pointedly expressed: 'I saw Mr. Balfour the other day, who said he did not think the difficulty over Egypt was with Mr. Gladstone, but rather with Sir William Harcourt, who believed in the curtailment of the British Empire if he believed in nothing else!'

Of all contemporary politicians Mr. Balfour attracted Stead most – more than anyone on his own side. In a letter to his friend, Mr. Reginald Brett, in October 1891, Stead declares that he has never voted Tory in his life and shudders at the notion of changing his Party, but that if Sir William Harcourt is to become Liberal Leader (as is not unlikely) he would really have to consider whether he could not work with Mr. Balfour.

'I entirely agree (he writes) with what you say about Balfour. If we could choose leaders by affinity I should choose him far and away before anybody else in Politics, but it is awful to contemplate putting out a hand to support the Tories in any shape or form.'

Stead's written communications with Mr. Brett during 1890 and 1891 are less frequent than in other years, but there are many allusions to this staunch friend in letters to others. In a hurried note dated August 19, 1891, to Admiral Fisher, who had invited him down to Portsmouth for some big naval function, Stead asks whether he may bring Mr. Brett with him, and reminds Fisher that 'we should have been utterly smashed in 1884 if it had not been for the help he was able to give us from the inside. He . . . has always been as true as steel in all questions concerning the navy.'

Among Mr. Brett's letters to Stead dating from this period one is very interesting. It is dated October 3, 1891. Stead apparently has claimed to be judged not by his talk but by what he has said in print. Here is Mr. Brett's comment:

'Well, perhaps I am wrong. But *I* have never met anyone who judged you from your writings, whose opinion corresponded with that which everyone forms who knows you personally.

'What does Miss Belloc [1] say to this? I take it that even your conscientious Nonconformists – were you not personally known to them – would resent many things that you say, attributing to you vices and opinions which are not yours.

'Why should you desire to be exclusively judged by what you write?

'Speech is a faulty medium at best. Writing even more so. Your

[1] Miss Marie Belloc, afterwards Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes, so well known as a gifted novelist. Miss Belloc had found a very early opening for her talents under Stead on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and remained one of his most valued friends.

writing may be, and is – I doubt not – a "strenuous attempt" to express your convictions. But convictions and character are like shot silk, and cannot be accurately determined from a single point of view.'

Throughout the years 1890–3 Stead was day-dreaming continually of the wonderful and unique daily paper which he would presently produce. At moments, however, his self-confidence left him and he became a victim to doubt. We find him in such a mood in a letter, dated October 22, 1891, to a sympathetic friend, the Hon. Rollo Russell:

'I do not think (he writes) that money is the difficulty at all, the difficulty lies not in the Capitalist but in the Editor. Although I think I could carry out many of the duties. . . . I fear I am totally unfitted to undertake the organization and management of so great an undertaking, involving as it does so many personal relations between the Employer and the Employed. I am a very good Master when I have a very good Servant, but I am a very bad Master, indeed the very worst of Masters, when I have a bad Servant, because I am not hard enough to keep him up to his work.'

Here are a few other passages (taken from letters written in 1891) which contain interesting touches of autobiography:

'Many a man who has a long memory makes a very poor journalist. I am like yourself in not having a good memory for detail. I cannot, for instance, quote a text correctly; I grasp ideas firmly enough but the *ipsissima verba* escape me.'

'I defended Mrs. Besant in 1885. I fought with her, arm in arm, all through the Trafalgar trouble in 1887, and there is nothing in that article that I have not constantly and publicly proclaimed in season and out of season, ever since I held a pen. . . . If I am bad now I have always been bad.'

'There is nothing worse for good people than not to be able to bear a joke at their own expense. I must say that of all the caricatures that have been published about myself I would not willingly have missed seeing one and I am quite sure I have been libelled – if such things are libellous – as much as any man.'

'You seem to have an entirely wrong idea as to my attitude in relation to the Jewish question. I think I am one of the most Hebraic of all English journalists, but my indebtedness to the Sacred Writings of your race does not blind me to the fact that many of your compatriots are men of whom it is well to be very wary when you do business with them.'

'Pray do me the justice of noting that I am more careful than any other writing man of our time never to use the word "English" if I can possibly use the word "English-speaking" instead. I do not think I ever refer to "Anglo-Saxons" – a word which I have discarded for reasons which you will appreciate. As for the Celts, I am so far from despising them that I see Grant Allen declares in the *Fortnightly Review* that I am an apostle of Celtism in England.'

* * *

There remain for consideration the innumerable letters of help and counsel and comfort in which Stead puts into practice his doctrine 'Be a Christ!'

These letters, of course, are for the most part of a strictly confidential character, many of them dealing with very private matters. From among those, however, which I have read I may, I think, cite a few passages which will serve to illustrate Stead's attitude towards his confidants known and unknown. He talks to them as frankly as to his most intimate friends. 'I can understand your position. I cannot share it,' he writes to a woman who can find no comfort in revealed religion, and who trusts to her own reason for guidance through the difficulties of life. 'I suppose these things are very much a matter of temperament and training. For my part, I am incapable of this strength which you seem to possess. I am like a child who clings. I have not any strength in myself; I need to be helped and helped all day and always, and a religion or philosophy which says there is no help but in yourself is to me a religion of despair.'

To a friend who has sent him some words of commendation he writes:

'I feel constantly that if it were not for the Lord's standing on my side, supporting me, guiding me and sheltering me, I should be of all men the most utterly undone. This abiding sense of my own

unworthiness sometimes weighs me down so much that such an expression as that you were good enough to send comes as dew upon the mown grass.'

And here is a typical example of his efforts to remove the doubts of others:

'The question which you have put has been, in all ages, the great difficulty of believing souls – How can a God permit sin, and the suffering which sin brings in its train? That is a question which many try to answer; and which no one can ever deal with to his entire satisfaction. All we know is that those who have appeared from time to time in the world, from Jesus Christ downwards, who have had the clearest insight into invisible things, and whose spiritual genius is tested by the extent to which their words and teaching have swayed the lives of millions – for generation after generation – all agree in declaring that there is a God, and that that God is good and merciful. Jesus, who had Himself a hard time of it, being born in poverty, spending His life as an outcast, and, ultimately, crucified as a scoundrel unfit even to live, never varied in all His sad experiences in proclaiming that the Great Invisible Power that rules the world was best described by the endearing term of "Our Father," whose nature is love. He knew better than I do what God is, and when I see those sad and terrible things which confront us at every turn in actual life, I can only say that we see but in part – we can only examine an infinitely small section of the Divine Plan, and I cannot doubt that God, who has all eternity to work in, will prove, before the end comes, that He is at least as good-hearted as you or I, and that would not be so if He could not fix up things ultimately better than they seem to be fixed up now.'

* * *

Spiritualism had long interested Stead, but it was his editorial instinct that impelled him to take the subject up with such zest in the Autumn of 1891. A search for 'good copy' was to end in something like a transformation of his entire life!

One of the earliest references of any importance to spiritualistic matters in the Letter-Books is in a note written to an inquirer towards the end of January 1891. Stead records in this that he has come to certain 'very definite conclusions,' though 'they do not go very far.' He is convinced, he says :

1. That there is more in Spiritualism than the ordinary sceptic will admit.

2. That very little trust can be placed in any Medium.

3. That the majority of those who have devoted themselves to the practice have derived little or no benefit from it, while in some cases serious harm has resulted.

4. That in 99 cases out of 100, communications addressed by spirits quoted to the living are such as would not be worth listening to, even if they were uttered by the Archangel Gabriel.

But he adds that he has one intimate friend, a journalist and a good man, who declares that Spiritualism has been to him 'an unspeakable boon, having enabled him to know . . . as an incontrovertible truth, that his dead are living and in communication with him.' This friend has said to him repeatedly that Spiritualism has 'robbed Death of all its terrors.'

A letter to that famous student of psychical matters, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, written in September 1891, makes it clear that Stead at this date is well launched on his new departure. In the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, he declares, exultantly, he has found a gold mine of journalistic material – a mine which, if properly worked, should enable him to produce a Christmas Number full of 'authentic apparitions' calculated to astonish everyone. He cannot understand how such wonderful stuff should have gone so long 'entirely waste' as far as the newspaper world was concerned. He encloses a proof of a tentative chapter on 'Multiplex Personality,' based exclusively upon the writings of Mr. Myers, himself, and of his fellow-inquirer, Mr. Gurney, and declares that he will be delighted to avail himself of any help Mr. Myers can give him. 'To present a Ghost to my public,' he adds, 'is a task of difficulty which I must not depute to another, however much abler and more competent he may be than I from the scientific point of view.' Mr. Myers, a little apprehensive as to Stead's methods, had perhaps suggested that some member of the Psychical Research Society might be entrusted with the 'difficult task' in question.

However that may have been, Mr. Myers evidently welcomed the chance of attracting general attention to the study to which he had been so long devoting his own acute intelligence, for the correspondence continues throughout the following four months.

'I am exceedingly glad to have your letter,' Stead writes to him on

October 26. 'I gather that you are no longer troubled with the misgivings which you expressed when we met' – whether the misgivings were as to the trustworthiness of a certain medium Madam B., or as to Stead's scientific competency, does not appear. 'I am very confident,' the letter continues, 'about the Double and have had a long conversation with Mrs. D –, who is this week going to make a determined effort to let me photograph her astral body.'[1]

A few days later Stead asks Mr. Myers if he knows about a Haunted House at Bath, in which the strangest noises are heard during the night, while the 'figure of a man with outstretched arms is visible standing on the window-sill.' Next day he writes again to make similar inquiries about 'this so-called Guy Fawkes in Barking Marches' and the 'haunted brewery in Anstey.' . . . And so on and so on.

There is no further indication of any misgivings on Mr. Myers's part until after the appearance of the Christmas Number in December, when he again seems to have shown himself just a little uneasy. Remembering the contrast between Mr. Myers's own meticulous methods and Stead's flamboyancy, one feels that as collaborators they were more than a trifle ill-yoked!

Stead entered into correspondence about the same time with that other pioneer of Psychical Research, Professor (later Sir William) Barrett, of Dublin. On October 29, 1891, we find him asking the Professor whether he would be willing to investigate a Haunted Castle near Roscrea, in Co. Tipperary.[2] In November he seeks to turn to practical account the supernatural gifts of a lady known to the Professor. A friend 'who has lost a valuable jewel,' he says, 'writes to me to know whether there is any chance of finding her lost treasures by the aid of your Governess at Workington. "Do you know where the good Governess is and whether I could communicate with her on the subject?" '

But perhaps Stead's definitive conversion to Spiritualism may be dated from his acquaintance with Miss A. M. Goodrich-Freer (now

[1] 'Mrs. D. has cut up rough,' we read on November 28, 1891, 'and will not experiment any more – has not even replied to my last letter. So her experience is lost.'

[2] To its owner, a clever and jolly Irishwoman with whom he had already been in correspondence for some time, Stead writes on November 3: 'Would you object to having your castle disenchanted? . . . We might organize a Mission Party to exorcise your Ghosts.'

Mrs. H. H. Spoer),[1] a psychically gifted lady whose identity was for a long time concealed under the pseudonym 'Miss X.'

An old friend of Stead's, the Rev. Henry Kendal, of Darlington, had spoken to him of Miss Freer as 'a depository of endless stores of authentic information as to apparitions' – so Stead writes in his first letter to her on September 7, 1891. A week or two later she has come to London, specially to see him; and he is able to describe her thus to another old friend, a companion of one of his sisters, and – like his sister – inclined to look askance at 'spooks':

'I have just lunched with a young lady who has seen five of her relations and friends who have appeared to her at the moment of death. She has also seen an indefinite number of others, and sees in the crystal – in short has a personal practical experience of almost every kind of phenomenal apparition, and is not in the least spoiled by it. She is, I think, about 25, and is devoted to good works; lives in Society, has had a first-class education, and is perfectly self-possessed.'

In October and November Stead and Miss Goodrich-Freer are meeting continually in London, and his hurried notes to her indicate something of his swift progress under her tuition. 'I telepathed madly to you this morning to come at 12 o'clock,' he writes from his office on November 12; a medium whom she has introduced to him has proved disappointing and he is in a difficulty. On December 15, he sends her a letter from a Father Keating 'who gives the Catholic Doctrine of the Double.' . . . Needless to add further illustrations here of this new development – we have already taken note of Stead's spiritualistic evolution. I shall cite only one more passage – an interesting acknowledgment of Miss Freer's efficiency. 'I recognize with great satisfaction,' he writes to her on December 16, 'the methodical neatness with which you do your work, and I heartily wish that you could infuse a little bit of that eminent virtue into my veins.'

[1] Author of *Essays in Psychical Research* (1899), and a number of other well-known volumes of great interest.

## CHAPTER 18

# STEAD'S FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA – HIS BOOK: *IF CHRIST CAME TO CHICAGO*

*October*, 1893 – *March*, 1894

'It will be most interesting to hear your views about Chicago, which is an extraordinary phenomenon, not less wonderful than Babylon must have seemed to an Envoy from the court of Hezekiah.' – From a letter to W. T. Stead from Mr. James Bryce (afterwards Lord Bryce) dated March 17, 1894.

### I

### STEAD INAUGURATES A SOCIAL REFORM CAMPAIGN IN CHICAGO

FROM a reading of the very cheerful 'Open Letter' written by Stead *en route* homewards from New York in March, 1894, and printed in the *Review of Reviews* the following month, no one could suspect that he had been through a period of acute disappointment and deep despondency during the earlier portion of his visit to America. But so it was. For several weeks before his departure he had put his whole soul into a scheme for a new daily paper, and when the news of its complete failure reached him, barely a month later, it was a bitter blow.[1] He was at that moment in Ottawa, as we shall see, on a visit of a week to Lord and Lady Aberdeen at Government House, having spent a day or two in New York and a fortnight in Chicago. The Chicago fortnight, luckily, was packed full with inspiriting adventures. New York had interested him particularly by some surprising resemblances to St. Petersburg. Chicago, 'an American Moscow, . . . embowered in trees' but 'canopied with a cloud of smoke,' did more than interest him; it opened out to him an unlooked-for opportunity for strenuous exertion.

From the moment of his arrival, Stead threw himself with ardour into the life of the great city, horrified by its present evils, but fascinated by the possibilities of its ultimate destiny. He foresaw in

[1] This scheme was explained and illustrated in a 32-page supplement to the November issue of the *Review*. Stead's glowing vision of it, as set forth to an astonished Chicago interviewer, will be found at the end of the book as an appendix.

it the future centre of the American Republic. The city that stood 'equidistant between the great lakes system of the North and the immense waterway of the Mississippi and Missouri,' and which had New York as its only rival, was bound to become the capital of the New World. Unlike New York, which had only an island to live on, and which could not spread beyond its circumscribed area, Chicago promised in time to cover an immense tract of country. It had space enough on the shores of Lake Michigan for the population of ten millions predicted for it when the trans-oceanic canal should be constructed which would enable the steamers of all countries to discharge their cargoes at its wharves. Already Chicago was Queen of the Central and Western States. It seemed to him that if Chicago could mount the crest of the civic revival then rising in America it might be the means of the regeneration of the whole country.

The moment, he felt, was ripe for action. The hopes born of the World's Fair, just then brought to a close; the contrasts between the ideals of the 'White City' and the hideous realities of the Chicago slums; the increasing labour troubles, illustrated very well by the recent assassination of the Mayor; – everything seemed to point to the need for a new movement of reform. Stead felt he was the man to lead it. 'Nothing,' he wrote afterwards, 'could have been further from my mind than to have undertaken a campaign in Chicago; but I seemed to have plunged into the situation, or to have been led there, with the result that, before I knew where I was, I was appealed to on every side to go forward and preach what came in the end to be a civic crusade against the evils which afflicted the city, and to plead for the union of all honest men against its rogues and boodlers.'

The above passage is taken from an article which Stead intended to publish in the *Review of Reviews*,[1] but which was never used. I shall give some more extracts from it. He is dealing with the first of two speeches which he delivered at the Central Music Hall, to a Trades Union Assembly. This was his 'jumping-off point,' as he said. He himself called together a second meeting in the Central Music Hall on the same evening:

'I advocated three things: first the establishment of a People's

[1] An article supplementing the 'Open Letter' already mentioned, included in the issue for April 1894.

Palace and Labour Exchange on the lake front; secondly, an improvement in the treatment of the casuals or homeless unemployed; and thirdly, an alliance between labour and religion for the purpose of capturing the political and municipal machine, and creating out of them an instrument of social and civic regeneration. A committee was immediately appointed to take action for the purpose of securing the erection of the People's Palace on the lake front. At that meeting a scheme was drawn up which met with general approval for the establishment of an institution which would combine all that was most useful in the various institutions of the Old World. Money is scarce in Chicago at present, but there is little doubt that before long some such institute will be established on the vacant site on the lake front. Chicago is singularly deficient from the English standpoint in such institutions. It is almost incredible that such a city, so great and prosperous, should be so miserably devoid of the appliances of civilization as we understand them in the older world. In the whole city there is scarcely a place where you can wash your face excepting a public house. The first public bath was opened shortly before Christmas. No one is permitted to bathe in the lake, there are no coffee palaces, teetotums, or anything of that kind in the whole of the city. There is a public library with four branch reading-rooms and many places of call throughout the city, but as for institutions, such as the People's Palace and the Polytechnic and the old Mechanics' Institutes, there are practically none. The Armour Institute is more of a technical college. The North Western University and the University of Chicago are institutions which in no way meet the needs of the labouring community. The common man in Chicago finds in the Saloon almost the only institution which cares for his material wants. The churches may save his soul, but they take very little account of his body; while they damn the saloon-keeper vigorously enough in theory, they allow the saloon-keeper to run the machine pretty much as he pleases, nor do they demean themselves so far as to enter into competition with him on his own ground. The necessity of fighting the saloon by putting something better in its place is beginning to be recognized, however, and one of the most gratifying signs of the times was the launching of the scheme of the People's Institution in connection with the popular but temporary institution which is carried on on the West Side by Bishop Fallows and the Rev. Dr. Clarke. If such an Institute were established in

every one of the thirty-four wards of the city, Chicago would have done something practical towards meeting the great social needs of the labouring population upon whose industry depends so much of her greatness.'

Stead proceeds to give a brief account of Hull House, the Toynbee Hall of Chicago, which his brother Herbert had described at some length in the *Review of Reviews* the year before. He continues:

'The best hope for Chicago is in the multiplication of Hull Houses or branch establishments affiliated with the central institution in all the slum districts of the city. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between the worthless society woman who devotes her days to pleasure and her nights to more or less pleasurable dissipation, and the patient, laborious, Christlike work of Miss Jane Addams and her coadjutors in Hull House.'

## II

### STEAD'S MESSAGE TO CHICAGO

We must go to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of November 13, 1893, for our account of the first of Stead's two conferences at the Central Music Hall. The occasion was worthy of a brilliant pen – the pen of a Steevens or a Wells; the *Tribune's* report is somewhat bald, but it gives us the main facts. Knowing our Stead, we can imagine how he carried himself upon this unfamiliar scene. His audience, we are told, included preachers and saloon-keepers, gamblers and theological professors and anarchists.

'It was after 3 o'clock when Mr. Stead arrived at the Central Music Hall. The body of the house and the first gallery were crowded already.

'At 3.20 o'clock after the Deasy Sisters had played a couple of selections, Mr. H. Madden, President of the Illinois Federation of Labour, called the meeting to order. Mr. Stead was cheered as he came forward. He clasped his hands, looked upwards, and began to pray:

' "O Lord, God, our Father, help us this afternoon to understand something of the love that is in the heart of our brother Jesus, and that whosoever does anything to relieve the sorrow of the least of

these, His brothers, does it under Him. We ask it for His sake and for their sake. Amen."

'Then he said:

' "I am glad to meet you this afternoon and to see that so large a number of representatives of all classes in Chicago have not resented the liberty I have taken in asking them to come together as friends to discuss the question whether, if Christ were to come to Chicago to-day, He would find anything in Chicago that He would wish to have altered."

'Mr. Stead went on to explain how the Gospel of Humanity in which he believed is outlined by James Russell Lowell, and he quoted from the poem "A Parable" to illustrate his meaning. Then he continued his address:

' "If you want to study religion in a country you want to study what Christianity has done; do not study it in the cathedrals but in the saloons. We must judge applied Christianity not by splendid ceremonies but by the extent to which it has been able to re-make fallen men and women. Wherever you see the mark of suffering you see the brand of anti-Christ.

' "Your worst people are the measuring rod by which you measure your Christianity.

' "No, I am not going to rail at Chicago. Chicago is a pretty fair section of mankind. We can match most of your bad points in London. If Christ had come to Chicago this morning He might have said:

' "Well, in the Old World, swollen hard with centuries of crime, a world grown grey in misery before I was born, there might be some reason for My failure, but here, in a New World, under new social conditions, here with no curse of crooked alley or soil soaked with sewage, with no kings or aristocracy, here I might expect that My work had achieved some measure of success." '

'While you are doing many things nobly,' Stead went on to tell his listeners, 'you are doing some things infamously,' and he proceeded to refer to Chicago 'scandals and disgraces which even a third-rate town in Europe would be ashamed of.'

*The Tribune's* report of his speech continues – I give it of course, in a greatly condensed form:

' "Before anyone can speak with any right to be heard as to the con-

dition of human beings, he must do as Christ did and put himself in their place. You cannot live in velvet drawing-rooms and elegant boudoirs and philosophize about the subject. You must go down, down into the depths . . .

'"I have been here two weeks. I went to Harrison Street Police Station a week ago and in the underground cells of that disreputable police station – if there is any purpose in you it will not survive another twelvemonth – I found prisoners thrust together in clumps, in cells with but one bed; the rest on the floor. And thus you pig together five, six, eight men to stay all night, the foul to corrupt those who are innocent, the drunken and bestial to make a little hell for their fellows. On the floor outside twenty or thirty men were lying without pillows or covers. They were cheek by jowl with the rakings of the hell of your city. I was told they were tramps. I think it is a disgrace to a civilized country that, because a man is out of work, he should be put to herd with criminals. One of your editors told me that for a tramp the toe of the boot is the proper thing in the day-time and a stone floor the proper thing at night. . . .

'"But I wish to speak of evils in the moral government of the town. Do not think I am here to advocate a general raiding policy on gambling dens, saloons, and other places of bad character. I would rather take my chance at the Day of Judgment with some people who are to be found in such places than with many a man and woman in your churches. I spent this morning talking to a saloon-keeper. (Laughter.) I say I think that saloon-keeper nearer the mark in most things than most of your journalists and preachers. I wish I could quote you the name of this saloon-keeper. He kept his saloon open to-day and last night, and last night he did a big business. Yet I think that man would be a most valuable advisory member of what I should call the practical Church of Christ in Chicago. (Hisses and scattered cheers.)

'"I say the worst enemy of practical work for making the saloon less of a curse are your Temperance people. (Hisses.) There are 6,000 odd saloons in Chicago. Perhaps 2,000 of them are run on some pretence of decency. You want to shut them all up. (Voices in the audience: 'Yes.') You will want to until the Day of Judgment at this rate.

'"Strike hands with the decent saloon-keepers to abolish the worst! You pass laws very slick in Chicago, but you don't enforce them.

You have an ordinance compelling the saloons to close at midnight. I asked my friend, the saloon-keeper, how it happened that some of the saloons remained open all night. He said they were under police protection. (Laughter.)

'"I do say it is a scandal and a disgrace that the laws are not administered equally. We should all resolve to remedy this. It is because good people are trying to do too much that they do nothing at all. If I had the commission to try to bring some kind of decency into your saloon system, I should take counsel, not with your temperance people, not with your churches, but with your best saloon-keepers. I should try to get Christian people to realize a saloon man's ideal, and if I failed I should give up Christianity. . . .

'"These are some of the things which I think Christ would object to if He were in Chicago to-day, and in the doing of which you nail Him to the Cross to-night and every night.

'"I do not know whether the appeal to join forces with other organizations has been often made to the churches or not, but it has been made now in your hearing by the President of the State Federation of Labour, and woe, woe, woe be unto you if it meets with no response!"

'Mr. Stead then went on to tell in great detail the story of an unfortunate woman, and concluded his address with this declaration:

'"If you want to make Chicago a moral place you must get together all the forces which make for righteousness, which make for love."

'There was loud applause as Mr. Stead sat down.'

A little Welshman named Thomas J. Morgan, well known in Chicago as a Socialist, now delivered a fiery harangue.

'"The story Mr. Stead tells us (he said) has been used by many thousands in the labour unions of Chicago during the last ten years – the story of the unfortunate working man and working woman, of the underpaid and the unfortunate – the story of the causes that lead to starvation, drunkenness and vice of all kinds. Never before has the story been told with the force and power with which it has been told this afternoon. It is not so much what is said but who says it. We have learned of existing conditions from a man whose honesty and veracity cannot be questioned. The question I ask myself is: How deeply into the hearts and minds of this great city will this blunt, bald, startling exposé of conditions go? Will it receive from

the public press that same ridicule which has followed the many efforts of the labour people of Chicago to bring to the attention of the city the same facts? Will his standing in the journalistic world command their respect or at least their silent acquiescence in the truth of what he says? (Applause.) I am in doubt. I hope with all my heart that his influence and power are so strong that he may reach the eyes and hearts of the people.

'"What would Christ say if He came here? What crime above all others would He condemn?

'"In my judgment the greatest crime a man can commit is not mentioned in the common law, but exists in our so-called institutions. That crime of all crimes is the crime of silence – a silence that has been broken here almost for the first time in the history of our city.

'"Now the veil has been torn aside, and you members of the G.A.R., of the Y.M.C.A., of your temperance societies, of your Sons of America, and Daughters of America, have been able to see the skeleton in your closet. (Prolonged applause.)

'"Your labouring men assemble peacefully on the lake front begging for work, and with the strong arm of the law are driven back into their tenement houses, that the visitors who come to see the White City might not see the misery of the Garden City which built it. (Applause.) Here and everywhere the puny voice of those who suffer and have suffered is refused to be heard, is drowned out in one way or another by this awful, hopeless social condition. Shall we hope from this day at least that those who by their work have tried to bring the public mind to a realization of what should be and what is to be done will be heard? After such statements as have been heard from Mr. Stead, will those with whom he now associates have some standing in the community? Will you again lapse into your insecure security? Do you think the upheavals that have forced themselves on your attention from time to time are the last that will come around? Do you believe that under these social conditions here in this free country, in this United States, there are no Anarchists, no bombs, no dynamite? Do you not believe some desperate man under the load which you allow to rest upon him will get uneasy and will revolt? Do you not think some man moved by his agony and desperation, will rise and say again:

'"Throttle the law! Kill the law! Stab the law!"'

Morgan was becoming more and more violent. Amid cheers and howls and hisses he ended thus:

'"If you well-to-do people do not listen, will not wake up, you do not know but that, thrown in your midst here, may be, the same as in Barcelona, a desperate man, who, feeling in himself all the injustice that is inflicted on his fellows, will kill, will destroy. This is no fancy picture. The reality exists from day to day everywhere. I only say it to shake you out of your false security. And, if the pleading of Editor Stead in the name of Christ, and for justice, cannot shake you out, may somebody use dynamite to blow you out!"'

The word 'dynamite' created intense excitement, and, as the Chairman showed himself powerless, Stead had to exert all his authority to control the assembly. It was a mistake, he declared, as soon as he could secure a hearing, to talk of dynamite in Chicago – the mere mention might act with the force of hypnotism on some man with a homicidal taint in his blood. Let them believe that the way of Jesus Christ was the true way! Let them be content to make known the fact. The fact simply stated would do more than anything else to clear the air and bring about a new social system.

Of the second Meeting I shall give Stead's own account from the unpublished document already cited; the *Tribune's* report confirms it in every particular.

'At the evening conference I presided myself, and had the great satisfaction of seeing an American audience perfectly willing to be managed by a Chairman who knew his own mind and who was determined to have his own way. It was no easy task keeping in order the great assemblage, crowded and enthusiastic, and consisting of men and women of every description of opinion: for my invitation to the conventional "disreputable" had been somewhat liberally responded to, and I had at least one keeper of a house of ill-fame on the platform [1]; but I had the great good fortune of carrying the meeting through from first to last without a hitch. Only once, when

[1] Stead had had two or three thousand tickets printed for both meetings, and had entrusted them to a detective agency with instructions to distribute them personally on Saturday night to all the lowest haunts of vice, gaming-halls, saloons and houses of ill-fame in the city.

an eloquent speaker, Mr. Jaxon, an Indian half-breed, wished to prolong his remarks beyond the allotted five minutes, did the audience manifest any restiveness. They wanted to hear Jaxon, and I was determined that they should not, as his time was up. They howled at me. I told them that they were perfectly free to vote anyone else into the Chair they pleased, but as long as I was in the Chair I meant to boss that meeting, and thereupon called upon the next speaker. The uproar subsided, and from that time I had no difficulty in putting things through.

'At this evening meeting I expounded the whole doctrine of the Civic Church, setting forth what ought to be done and what might be done in Chicago. I then invited all those who wished to speak to send up their names – I had up on the platform by special invitation one of the Anarchists who had recently been pardoned by Governor Altgeld. Sam Fielden was an old Yorkshire Methodist before he was led away into making violent speeches at the meetings of the Anarchists. I was assured by those who knew him that there was no man in Chicago who was more sincerely desirous of promoting the welfare of the community than he was. I had been specially asked by some of his former Methodist companions to give him a breakfast at the hotel, and then had some talk with Governor Altgeld, who had just pardoned him. Fielden was unable to be present at the afternoon meeting owing to the celebration which was taking place that very day at the tombs of the executed Anarchists. But he came in the evening. As soon as I had finished speaking and urging that we were willing to accept all men of every creed and profession, so long as they were honestly desirous of improving the condition of Chicago, I introduced Fielden to the audience, and gave him the right hand of fellowship on the platform. It created no small scandal in the city among those to whom the very name of Anarchist was as a red rag. But I am more than ever convinced that it was the right thing to do, and it served to illustrate my meaning better than anything else that I might have done. Fielden had served his time and been pardoned by the constitutional authorities, he was a good man, zealous for the public welfare, and he had atoned by imprisonment for any mistake into which he might have been led.

'The conference was prolonged and harmonious, and at its close it was unanimously decided to appoint a nominating committee representing business, labour, the church and philanthropy, with instruc-

tions to bring together as speedily as possible the representatives of the best elements in Chicago, with the purpose of ascertaining whether or not a civic federation could or could not be organized which would carry out the ideas which I had set forth in my address. With the appointment of this committee the conference broke up, and the motliest assembly ever got together in the city dispersed.'

Next morning Stead left Chicago for Ottawa, via Toronto.

## III

### BAD NEWS

By the time Stead reached Ottawa the fate of the daily paper scheme had been decided irrevocably. The chances against it, his manager had written to say, were '1,000 to 1.' Stead took this terribly to heart just at first. He felt that all his hopes and dreams of usefulness in London were at an end. The rebuff came at a moment which seemed to him full of menace to Liberalism. England was 'going to perdition' and he could not 'hold the pass' with a monthly periodical. In an excited letter to Mr. Stout, dated Ottawa, November 16, he declaims a trifle wildly against old associates – against 'Massingham, Labour and Co.' in particular; even against his own brother, Herbert, whom he had left in charge of the *Review of Reviews*, and whom he accuses of 'savaging Rhodes' therein. 'Does Herbert not know,' he exclaims indignantly, 'that Rhodes is the ablest and wisest English-speaking man in the whole race?'

'What would you think,' he asks Mr. Stout, 'if I were to decide to start my paper at Chicago instead of in London?' 'Might not Chicago be made the centre for the English-speaking race?' . . . 'Supposing £200,000 were forthcoming in America?' . . . 'Would it not be a sign-post?'

He ends, however, on the despondent note. 'I am out of sorts and full of gloom.'

Stead's next letter, dated Government House, Ottawa, November 20, is much more optimistic. As the result of too much public speaking, indeed, he is physically 'run down' and has had to spend his first day at Ottawa in bed, but Lady Aberdeen is taking care of him in every way as though he were 'a patient in hospital,' and he and the

*Review of Reviews* are being made much of by everyone from the Governor-General and Prime Minister downwards.

Two days later he does his best to find in his setback 'very great reason for gratitude.' 'I have,' he says, 'had every possible advantage I could have wished to put my ideas fairly before the public, but if the public does not want my ideas, well and good. It is a great thing to get the fact definitely ascertained at a minimum expenditure.' 'I have always had a kind of feeling,' he confesses, however, 'that I had a certain following in the country and that people did believe in me and did regard it as important that I should have my say. . . . Now we find that that is a mistake, and the discovery, however humiliating to me personally, is not unwelcome. It is at least well to know where you stand.' . . .

Some people had attributed the failure in some degrees to the bad printing of the specimen number. Stead will not admit this. 'No, I have no reasons to throw the blame on Byers or anyone else. . . . The scheme had to sink or swim not upon Byers, but upon me. . . . In other words the *National Observer* is about right as to my being played out. I may do some more work elsewhere, but it will not be in Daily Journalism in London.'

He then proceeds to reflect sorrowfully and anxiously upon the effects of this failure upon the *Reviews of Reviews* itself. It is obvious, he says, if there is to be no *Daily Paper* the elaborate system of indexing and press-cutting which has been carried on hitherto by Miss Hetherington's Dept. must be dropped, having no longer any *raison d'être*[1]; and there may have to be other reductions in the staff and in expenditure generally. 'I do not want to shorten sail abruptly so as to throw anyone out of employment. . . . You can discuss the matter with Herbert at leisure, and I hope you will see some way out of it. At present I do not.' As to his own immediate future he is not troubled, as there seems to be a 'great demand' for him in America. 'I could go on the stump and be welcomed everywhere,' he declares – 'in Australia as well as in Canada and the States.'

Next day he is in something like his normal spirits again. He is full of the character-sketch which he is doing of the Aberdeens who have been 'extremely kind' to him, and he details his future movements:

[1] Miss Hetherington was in control of a department engaged on a very elaborate index to public events, etc., which was intended to become an important feature in the organization of the new paper.

Montreal on Saturday night, Toronto on Monday; Niagara, Tuesday; then Chicago once more, 'to get out my pamphlet,' Cincinnati, New York and Boston. 'My love to everybody and tell them not to let their pecker go down because my scheme of a Daily Paper does not commend itself to the public' – this sentence so far, in Willie Stead's neat, small, upright handwriting: then, in Stead's own – '*at the first showing.*' . . .

'It is always good,' wrote Stead long afterwards, 'to expect the best but to prepare for the worst; and when the thing happens which the Destinies have decreed, to make the best of it, but very few are able to say "Hallelujah!" when the will of the Lord has been revealed in the wreck of their hopes.'[1]

He had now said 'Kismet' – in a week or two he would be saying 'Hallelujah!'

## IV

### HOW STEAD CAME TO WRITE HIS BOOK

The last week of November found Stead back at Chicago and co-operating with some of its leading men and women to organize a Civic Federation which should cope with all the urgent problems of the moment. A sum of over £40,000 was raised to deal with immediate distress. One measure which set the whole town talking was the appointment of a band of 3,000 men, jocularly called Stead's Brigade, to work on the streets; Stead, borrowing a suit of ragged workman's clothes and a shovel, worked in a gang of a hundred for three hours. It was bitterly cold, and he exerted himself so violently in his effort to keep warm that afterwards, being kept waiting in a *queue* for three-quarters of an hour when the time came for them to deliver up their shovels, he caught a bad chill and was obliged to conclude the experiment that evening. He had intended to sleep, like his mates, in a common lodging-house. 'It is a curious sensation,' he reflects, 'that of walking through the main business streets of a city dressed in rags. I had experienced something of it before when I first went out for exercise with the prisoners in Coalbath-in-the-Fields prison. It is an odd feeling due to the fact that, while you feel that you are not a whit changed in your character, or that you are less worthy of

[1] In the *Review of Reviews* for April, 1912 in his last 'Progress of the World.'

respect than you were before, at the same time you know that everyone who meets you appraises you, not according to your intrinsic value, but according to the value of the toggery which you have got on.'

In due course the Civic Federation came into existence, with Mr. Lyman J. Gage as President, and Mrs. Potter-Palmer, and Mr. J. McGrath, a prominent Labour Leader, as Vice-Presidents.

Committees were appointed under the heads, Municipal, Philanthropic, Industrial, Educational and Social, Moral Reform and Political Action; and they all got to work at once. The only definite programme so far – so Stead says – was the almost revolutionary one 'that no scoundrel need apply for the position of Alderman of the City of Chicago.' – ' "The Civic Federation of Chicago," up to the present moment,' declared Stead in March 1894, 'is the best and most complete realization of the ideal of the Civic Church for which I have pleaded so often. The conception of that Federation in such a city and at such a period was well worth all the time I spent at Chicago.'

We cannot follow Stead in detail through all his Chicago doings – an account of them is embodied in the famous book which he now began to write: how in a ten minutes' speech at a Ladies' Club he 'stated the obvious fact that the idle and worthless rich were infinitely more disreputable than the lowest prostitutes,' a remark treated by local pressmen as a sensational attack upon leading members of Chicago Society and telegraphed as such all over the world; how he summoned to a conference held at Willard Hall 'every minister of religion described as such in the Directory of Chicago,' in order that all the city's churches might be formed into one unit; how he then endeavoured, with a success which he says exceeded his hopes, to bring about co-operation between the ministers of religion and the working men; and how he helped to secure the election of an ideal Mayor of Chicago in Mr. John Patrick Hopkins, writing eight separate leaflets on his behalf and circulating 500,000 copies of them.

Here are the two concluding paragraphs of the hitherto unprinted article by Stead from which so many sentences have been cited above:

'Looking back on the whole of my visit, I have every reason to be grateful and pleased with the use I was able to make of my time in

the city of Chicago. Whether or not Chicago will ever become the ideal city of the world is for the future to say; certainly she, more than any other city, has the opportunity at her feet. She is not laden down by any *damnosa hereditas* of the blunders and crimes of the past; her citizens are full of a boundless élan, and full of faith in the destiny of their city. They have a position of unique prominence in the heart of the New World. They have the incentive of the aspiration of the World's Fair; they have at their head a young and capable chief magistrate, who has set himself against the worst evils which afflict city life in America. It seems to me that nowhere on the whole of the earth's surface, for one of my ideas and aspirations, could I have been more profitably employed than I was in Chicago in the winter of 1893–94.

'I have not referred at all in these two papers to the chief literary memorial of my stay in Chicago. Instead of bringing out a pamphlet, as I had contemplated, containing the report of the speeches delivered at the conferences at the Central Music Hall, I wrote a book of nearly 500 pages published at 2*s*. (50 cents), entitled *If Christ came to Chicago*. In this book I have stated, with such clearness and emphasis as I am capable of, what it seems to me Christ would think if He came to Chicago, and what He would endeavour to do.'[1]

[1] English readers who have not visited Chicago or followed the progress of the city of recent years will like to know to what extent Stead's ardour and energy bore fruit. Here is what Mr. Hal O'Flaherty, European Manager of the *Chicago Daily News*, has to say on the subject:

'Many of the Chicagoans whom Stead inspired thirty years ago have devoted their lives to civic improvements and are still working along the lines which he advocated in those Music Hall Meetings. His dream of a great civic centre on the Lake front has been more than fulfilled. On new land, created by filling in the foreshore, have been built a sports ground and open-air theatre of classic beauty, and an institute of art, renowned the world over. The University of Chicago and the Armour Institute of Technology have grown with the city, the University having now nearly 14,000 students and the Institute 1,000. In place of the ill-kept streets of Stead's time, Chicago now boasts of 32 miles of boulevards and 842 acres of parks, Lincoln Park alone covering over 500 acres. While the city's population has not yet reached the figure anticipated by Stead, its rate of growth indicates that it will some day be close to ten million. At present there are 2,701,000 people residing in Chicago, an increase of 1,600,000 since 1890, making it the fourth largest city in the world.'

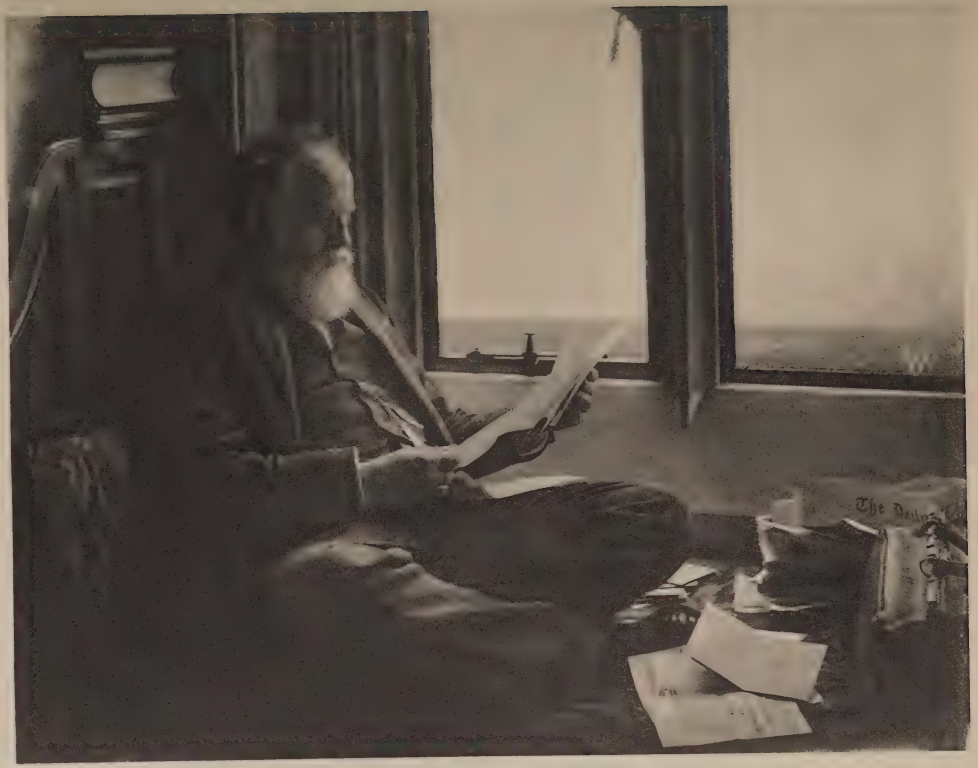
## CHAPTER 19

# STEAD IN HIS FORTIES – SOME IMPRESSIONS AND MEMORIES

MANY impressions and memories of Stead during those early years of the *Review of Reviews* are available. I shall string a few of them together. They will enable us to visualize him as he was in his 'Forties': his bushy beard with less colour in it now, but not yet grey enough to justify anyone in addressing him as 'Grandpa Stead' – a title to be conferred on him, he used to complain laughingly, before he reached fifty-five.

An American journalist, Mr. Frank Carpenter, in the course of an article in the *Washington Evening Star* for December 24, 1892, gave as lifelike a picture of Stead in his editorial office at Mowbray House as I have seen anywhere:

'I sent in my letters of introduction (writes Mr. Carpenter) and a moment later I was seated in his workshop. This is a big room which looks out on the River Thames, and every part of which is packed with individuality and ideas. Upon its doors in letters of brass are printed the words, "The Sanctum." Its walls are covered with photographs, and upon the mantel over the open fire were many portraits of the most famous men and women of the times. Among these were the lean intellectual face of John G. Whittier, the kind fatherly countenance of Walt Whitman, and the cultured features of James Russell Lowell. Over the doors of the office were texts of the Scriptures, and between the windows was a roller-top desk which was littered with manuscripts, and near it a wide divan which was also covered with papers of various kinds. A large bust of Cardinal Manning looked down from the top of the desk and, as I entered, Mr. Stead rose from a chair in front of it and took my hand. He at once plunged into business with me, and in five minutes he told me more about London than I had been able to learn in the week I had spent in trying to find out about things before coming to him. He is more like an electric dynamo in clothes than any man I know. He talks like lightning, and a blaze of intellectual sparks follow his words. He looks more like a practical American Methodist preacher than a London *littérateur*. He is plain in his dress and habits. His soft brown hat is crushed in at the top, and his snuff-coloured suit of



W. T. Stead in his "Sanctum" at Mowbray House
A very characteristic position.

*From a photograph by Ernest H. Mills.*

business clothes looked as though their owner had been on a roughing tour and had just got home. He talks more like an American than an Englishman. He has no cockneyisms or anglicisms in his conversation. He never says "You know," and the only English slang I noticed in his talk was the word "blooming," by which he would now and then refer to some people whom he held in contempt as "the whole blooming set." He is, I judge, about five feet seven inches high, and he weighs about 150 pounds. He has a florid complexion, bright blue eyes and a bushy, reddish-brown beard. His hair is combed up from a high, broad and full forehead, and he stoops a little in his shoulders. He laughs easily, and tells a story as well as he writes it.'

Stead took Mr. Carpenter out to lunch at one of his favourite restaurants in the Strand, either the still popular Gatti's or else Gatti and Rodesano's (now extinct), and there they continued the conversation. Stead seems to have been in one of his most exultant moods. We have seen how dissatisfied he was to become with the *Review of Reviews* – how inadequate and altogether futile he was to find it as a political organ. At this date – or at all events, on this occasion – he was all for the monthly as against either the daily or the weekly:

'The daily (he assured his guest) has such a short life that its area of influence must be a limited one. It dies the day it is born, and it can never reach the world at large. The weekly extends further, but its news is also transient in its character. The daily is a revolver. It is good for six shots at a short range, and it does its works admirably. The weekly is like a rifle. Its range is longer, but it is effective for that distance only. The monthly is the modern cannon. It carries 500-pound shots for miles, and when they go forth the atmosphere of the whole earth quivers. Our field in the *Review of Reviews* I conceive to be that of the English-speaking people of the world, and our end and aim is to bring these people close to one another.'

And he proceeded to descant on this favourite theme of his – the necessity for bringing the whole English-speaking world into one great union. Mr. Carpenter objected that the governments of the United States and the British Empire were so different that such a union was hardly possible:

'There is not so much difference as there seems to be (replied Stead); the whole world is coming nearer every year to the level

of republicanism and self-government. We are rapidly approaching it in England. The fact that we have a Queen and a royal family does not affect the matter. They are of no special influence. They have their place. They are ornamental figures on our governmental tables, but they affect the feast no more than the bouquets with which you ornament your tables at home. They are merely a detail, and they have little to do with the government.[1]

We may picture Stead thus occupied at least two or three mornings in every week, with some American or Colonial or Continental visitor, or some colleague on the London or Provincial Press, or some political ally or intimate personal friend, – a woman at least as often as a man: first, a colloquy at the office, interrupted by telephone messages and a hundred other things; then, a walk to one or other of those two Strand restaurants, or to the Criterion perhaps, a leisurely lunch and unlimited disputation. Lunch-time was almost the only time when Stead escaped from hustle. He was neither *gourmet* nor glutton, but he took his glass of stout and he smoked cigars, and was unfailingly cheerful and convivial. He no longer ruled out wine on principle, but he drank it seldom and sparingly.

Here is another aspect. It is from a reminiscence contributed in 1912 to *East and West* by Miss M. Burnett, a lady who served under him for nearly twenty years. She has mentioned that when he started the *Review of Reviews* Stead was a man of forty:

'Even by this time (she writes) the strenuous work he had already gone through on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had robbed his looks of much of their freshness. Doing the work daily of three men, though he did not feel it hard work, yet allowed him very often short commons of sleep and rest, which early told on his looks and made him look old before his time. Indeed, but for another of Nature's kind gifts he could not have pulled through such continued fatigues as he gave himself, but when utterly worn out from lack of sleep, he could, when his portion of work was done, lie down on the top of a table, and without pillow or any easement, fall sound asleep for an hour and rise up as fresh as a lark, for any further effort.'

To his staff, Miss Burnett declares, Stead was all kindness and

[1] As a rule Stead was disposed rather to magnify the importance of Royalty in the British Empire.

consideration, and consequently he was much beloved, but he was by no means a careless task-master:

'No! far from it. He was such a hard master himself and so thorough in all he did, that the staff were stimulated to do their work in the same effective manner. A good example is worth pounds of rules and regulations and fines for negligence, which so many superficial employers seem to resort to, in order to get what they consider to be the best out of their employees. It is a great mistake – human nature will never do its best under coercion. Hard work requires cheerfulness and confidence. Goodwill at the top is responded to by goodwill at the bottom, which keeps the wheel of life turning steadily and well. This Mr. Stead always realized, and he made it his rule of action.'

One matter in regard to which he felt very strongly was the importance for everybody of keeping well *au courant* with the public affairs of the day. 'Not read to-day's papers!' he exclaimed once to a member of his staff who had made this admission, 'No, no, that will never do! Whatever else you may leave undone it must never be the reading of the daily papers.' He discussed the contents of the papers with all his assistants, Miss Burnett says, in the most liberal-minded manner:

'He never expected his staff to agree with him because he was their chief, or because he was endowed by nature with unusual ability. An honest opinion was agreeable and interesting to him. These discussions were a great enjoyment to his staff, and a form, no doubt, of education in the practice of reasoning.' Perhaps Mr. Stead looked on his staff as specimens of the outside public, to whom editors are always ready to lend an ear.

The genial friendliness which marked the intercourse of the great mind with his staff, pervaded the staff itself and made the office a very happy place.

* * *

Among Stead's most intimate associates in the early nineties was Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Lunn, the founder of the famous Grindelwald Conference, who had seen something of him in Dublin at the time of the 'No Reductions, No Rent!' campaign in 1886. Since then, Dr. Lunn had been a Medical Missionary in India. In 1890, he had returned home and had written some articles which had provoked an angry controversy in the Wesleyan Missionary world. This led up

to a friendship with Stead which proved life-long, and which was particularly close in 1891 and 1892. Sir Henry Lunn has many stories to tell of Stead's doings and sayings during this period. The first of these is connected with the Missionary controversy above mentioned:

'In view of the temper of Methodist opinion on the subject (writes Sir Henry) I foresaw that my resignation would be made inevitable. I wrote to Stead, and he replied, "Don't trouble about these things; it is God's way of stirring us up at times when we need it. Never strike sail to a fear. Come and lunch with me at the Criterion." With that boundless generosity which he always manifested towards anyone who was fighting the battles he cared for, he arranged that we should write a syndicated letter over the signatures W. T. Stead and H. S. Lunn, and that I should undertake the business management of the syndicate and write at such times when he was busy, and on such questions as he did not wish to take up, and divide the proceeds equally. It was a most generous arrangement. He was then the most eminent journalist of the day. I was comparatively unknown. Twenty papers accepted our weekly letter, and I was privileged for fifteen months to work in the closest comradeship with him. I suppose that, with him, any fifteen months would have been full of incident, but these months were at the very high-water mark of his career.'

Here is another story, dating probably from the summer of 1893, when the *Daily Paper* project was so much on Stead's mind:

'Some time during this period, I forget exactly when, he went over to Paris. He was at that time waiting for the millionaire who he felt convinced would come along and provide the necessary half-million for him to start a great daily paper. When he came back he said to me, "I went in to Notre Dame to have a talk with God, when an overwhelming sense came over me of the greatness of the task to which I was called with this *Review of Reviews* (then at the height of its success) and the *Daily Paper*. I felt so crushed that I said to God, "Is this not putting too many eggs in one basket?"

'In this sense of the nearness of God, Mr. Stead had much in common with those old Puritans of whom Macaulay said that, "Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Almighty through an obscuring veil, they aspired . . . to commune with Him face to face."'

And here is an example of Stead's wonderful responsiveness and

generosity – I shall follow it up with another which I have also at first hand:

'A characteristic incident of a different kind that occurred during that year was when I introduced him to a young lady novelist at the very beginning of her career. I remember laying the story before him as follows: "This young lady is the sister of a missionary I knew in India. She has come to you to know if you can give her some typewriting, because it is quite impossible for her to work at home in consequence of the distractions of home life, and the fact that there are two or three invalids in the family."

'He went out and spoke to her, and said, "What are the facts?"

'She replied, "I have written one novel which has secured for me an order from Heinemann for another novel, and an order for a third novel from one of the Dundee papers."

'He looked at her for a minute, and said, "It is like putting a race-horse to a plough to put you to a typewriter."

'Returning to me, he said, "You are quite sure it is a genuine case?" and I assured him that it was so. He went out again (and it must be remembered that at that time he was by no means a rich man), and said, " How much do you want?"

'She replied, "Thirty shillings a week for a year."

' "All right," he said. "That is £80. I will let you have it. Pay me back as soon as you can." Within two years one of her novels was reviewed by Gladstone, and her success was assured.

'This is the kind of incident which explains why to-day hundreds of people, if not thousands, all over the world are lamenting the loss of one who, in some crisis of their life's history, proved a real and true friend to them.'

The young novelist was Miss Annie Holdsworth, author of those remarkable books: *Joanna Traill, Spinster*, and *The Years that the Locusts have Eaten*.'

It was in 1891 that Stead made the acquaintance of Miss Elizabeth Robins, distinguished then as an interpreter of Ibsen's characters, more widely known now through her own play, 'Votes for Women,' and her many brilliant novels. Miss Robins's friendship with Stead began by his giving her his book about Ober-Ammergau and letters of introduction to some of the performers in the Passion Play. She did more than anybody else to overcome his prejudice against the ordinary

theatre, as we shall see presently. The few lines which she has been so kind as to write for me refer to a later period, but I include them here as a striking pendant to Sir Henry Lunn's story of Miss Holdsworth:

'All the world knows that Mr. Stead was the most stimulating of companions. I never knew any being more generous-minded. With all his simplicity there was a touch of magic in the man. In his company the unattainable drew near and beckoned like a friend. I suppose I should hardly have made a journey to Ober-Ammergau but for him, and I should certainly not have gone to the Klondyke. Why was I depressed, he insisted, one day in 1900, and I found myself telling him my sore anxiety about my youngest brother who had gone to the North in the Gold Rush of '97, and now for nearly a year had made no sign; how I would give everything in the world to try at least to find him and bring him home. "Why not?" he said, as though I had expressed a wish to cross the Strand. I glanced at the "greater outlay" than I could undertake – But he would make some paper give me a commission to write a series of letters from the new Gold Fields! He did this of course – when did he ever fail anybody? But he himself advanced the necessary funds. The letters were only begun, for I found typhoid fever out there as well as the object of my quest and was ill for so long that by the time I found some strength my "news" was news no longer. But I wrote "The Magnetic North" and I think my friend was content. I can only say that he stands apart in my grateful memory.'

* * *

Yet another very celebrated novelist dates her friendship with Stead from the early 'nineties. *The Heavenly Twins* was the great literary success of the spring of 1893, thanks in no small measure to Stead's keen interest in it and its author, Sarah Grand. A brief notice of it appeared in the *Review of Reviews* before Stead himself had made acquaintance with the first of its three volumes – the three-decker period of publishing was not yet ended. He began to read it aloud to his wife of an evening, and very soon found that he had come upon a writer of quite unusual mark. Many critics of distinction – Stopford Brooke among them – had already made this discovery, and the novel was being widely talked about, but not until Stead came back to it in the *Review of Reviews* in April, making it the 'book of the month,' and discoursing of it with even more than his usual zest, –

acclaiming it enthusiastically for its singular merits while 'going for' what seemed to him its glaring faults, – did the book and author attain their full fame. Not content with this, Stead wrote a vigorous reply to a hostile criticism of the 'Twins' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mr. Cust, who was editing the paper this year in his clever, slap-dash fashion, welcomed this communication from its former editor – his first contribution to it since 1889 – and allowed it to become a starting-point for a hot controversy in which Mr. Haldane McFall, Mme Sarah Grand's stepson, broke a lance very gallantly and creditably on her side.

By this time, of course, Stead and Mme Sarah Grand were in correspondence. In fact, on April 13, we find Stead claiming that he and she are in supernatural communication also. 'You have written with my hand very curiously,' he tells her in a short letter, 'and by no means so kindly as you have written with your own hand.' Soon they are close friends – real affinities. 'Why did you not tell me what the thrill was that you got out of the book?' he asks her on April 22, alluding to his Christmas Number for 1892, of which she has spoken, 'and what the idea was which is to serve as a point of union between us?' Two very interesting letters follow on April 26 and April 28. They are full of self-revelation, so illustrative of Stead's unconventional frankness and active kindness, and eagerness to be of use, that I am particularly glad to have permission to reproduce passages from them here. Mme Sarah Grand remembers that she had been 'in the dumps' just then – an experience which comes at times to most of us and one from which Stead, as we know, was not exempt – and that she had been declaring that life had lost all interest for her: Stead recommends to her the best and most efficacious cure for the malady – forgetfulness of one's self and absorption in the needs of others.

With the first of the two letters – beginning 'My dear Friend,' as do most of these which follow – he sends her a copy of the little book on Mrs. Josephine Butler, the first half of which he wrote while in Holloway Gaol. Will she read it? There are some pages in it which may be to her a message from the depths or the heights – more helpful to her than anything else he has ever written. 'So I commend them to you,' he continues, 'with the affectionate solicitude with which a father throws a life-belt to his daughter, who is struggling in the trough of the sea. It may be useless to you: I cannot say; I am not

infallible, and you are not frank with me, but it seemed to me, when I first met you, and it seems to me still that these pages will bring you and me into closer sympathy than we have hitherto been, and may be to you a word spoken in season that may be helpful to your soul.' In the conclusion, he talks of the splendid work which Mrs. Andrews and Dr. Kate Bushnell had been doing in India. If she were to read about their achievements, he tells her, she could not but begin again to take an interest in life.

The second letter is equally stimulating in a livelier vein. Sarah Grand knows him, he declares, but he does not know Sarah Grand, because she is afraid to confide in him fully. Until she does so he will never be able to be of much real service. 'You wear a yashmak,' he says to her, 'whereas I take my walks abroad without even the thinnest of veils. Your letters always give me a sense of great sadness, a kind of hopeless feeling that comes when you see a poor bird with a broken wing trying to fly. The gap between you and Mrs. Butler will have to be bridged before you find yourself and are yourself. Nobody should have more hell-fire under his boiler than is necessary for the generating of the steam with which he does his work in the world. In your case, you keep stoking up the fire, but you provide no outlet for the steam. You will burst your boiler some day if you do not change.'

The friendship thus pleasantly begun lasted throughout Stead's lifetime. Some day Mme Sarah Grand herself may tell us more about it.

* * *

There is no one in the literary world of London whose acquaintance with the modern history of the English Press can quite compare with that of the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll, LL.D., founder of the *British Weekly* and the *Bookman*, and so widely known by his own writings over the two pseudonyms 'Claudius Clear' and 'A Man of Kent.' Dr. Robertson Nicoll knew Stead well and, in a long obituary sketch printed in the *British Weekly* after the loss of the *Titanic*, had many interesting things to say about him. Here I shall transcribe only a single passage, with a story in it which is delightfully Stead-like:

'There was about him what might be called an apocalyptic element, and he indulged it to the full. Dreams kept chasing dreams in his mind, plans for catastrophic discoveries in medicine, in science, in

religion, in cures for cancer, pink and white remedies warranted to do anything, plans for the fertilization of the soil or for extracting gold from sea water. Above all, he surrendered himself absolutely to Spiritualism. On this subject, and on this subject only as far as I know him, he was intolerant. "It is shameful," he once wrote to me, "that a Christian journalist should refuse to study the only proof of Christianity that can be offered to the human mind." He himself was a truly religious man. "I am," he would often say, "a sinner saved by grace, and that is my creed." But I think he wanted more tangible evidence. He was "sick of believing, sick to see and know."

'When the *Review of Reviews* was at the height of its popularity, Mr. Stead once sent for me, saying he wished to see me on most important business. I went to his office and he began:

' "You know the *Review of Reviews* is booming."

' "Yes," I replied.

' "I have been thinking of commencing a religious *Review of Reviews*, and I have resolved to do it if you will go halves with me."

' "Have you thought of a title?" I asked.

' "Yes, *Gesta Christi* is the title."

' "I don't like it," I said.

' "No," he replied; "Mrs. Besant doesn't like it."

' "What has Mrs. Besant to do with it?" I asked.

' "Oh, Mrs. Besant, of course, will do the Labour Department."

' "Have you any other ideas?" I asked.

' "Yes, if you go in for it, I will start immediately for Rome to get the co-operation of the Pope. That is an absolute necessity."'

Was there ever anybody else in the world, one wonders, who managed to have Mrs. Besant and the Pope thus simultaneously on the brain!

Stead had Mrs. Besant on the brain at most times. His unswerving belief in her and his untiring championship of her are constantly in evidence. A letter to him from Lady Aberdeen, dated December 26, 1891, affords a very interesting illustration of this. Lady Aberdeen can at no period of her life have been thought narrow-minded or given over to unreasonable prejudices, but in common with the immense majority of people in those days she had been under a misapprehension as to Mrs. Besant's antecedents and character. Now she has met this heroine of Stead's for the first time, returning to England from Canada:

'And do you know (Lady Aberdeen writes) who was one of our fellow-passengers? Mrs. Besant! Do you remember once upon a time my venturing to suggest that you should not put her name quite to the forefront of the writers for *The Morning Paper*? [1] May I apologize for that suggestion? I did not know Mrs. Besant then. I am glad to think that I know her a little now and I feel as if I knew her a great deal better than many people whom I am supposed to know. I entirely understand the feeling that you have expressed to me about her.

'Several of the passengers, headed by Mr. Atkinson, M.P., asked her to give a lecture one evening in the saloon, which she did. Aberdeen took the chair, and the impression made by her sole and intensely earnest and stirring address was very remarkable. The smoking-room contingent who gathered out of curiosity left awed and solemnized, and indeed I think that all present felt that they had but rarely heard so powerful a sermon, uttered too with so unmistakable and intense a conviction of the message to be delivered being divine.

'What happiness it is to recognize that message coming to divers spirits in divers forms but ever bearing the one stamp of its origin, and how inspiring it is to be brought into contact with one more of the powers which are making for righteousness and the coming of His Kingdom!'

* * *

If this bundle of sketches of Stead in his Forties would have been incomplete without Dr. Robertson Nicoll's reminder of his fads and hobbies, his will-o'-the-wisps and white elephants, it would be still more seriously at fault without some allusion to what may be called the minor 'side-shows' of the *Review of Reviews*. Miss A. E. Lawrence, who, like Miss Burnett, was for many years a highly valued member of his editorial staff, has been good enough to favour me with the very interesting notes which follow:

'Some of these "side-shows" have developed into permanent institutions. Take for instance the "Scholar's International Correspondence." In 1895 a letter reached Mr. Stead from a French schoolmaster, M. Mieille, then of Draguignan, to be wellknown later in connection with touring in the Pyrenees. M. Mieille wrote that those

[1] In 1890 this was the title Stead had in mind. Later he changed it to *The Daily Paper*.

of his scholars who corresponded with English pupils were greatly helped in learning the foreign tongue by this means, and suggested that Mr. Stead should co-operate with a French Magazine in the organization of international correspondence. Mr. Stead, who had interested his readers in the "Gouin" method, saw at once the utility of the scheme, and entrusted the organization to an English teacher. London teachers scoffed; indeed one Head of a great secondary school went so far as to say that of all the wicked schemes planned by Mr. Stead this of putting virtuous English boys in touch with vicious foreign lads was the worst! Scotch teachers, however, took to the plan at once, and as few French girls were ready to take part at first, allowed Scotch girls to correspond with the superabundant French boys. The scheme rapidly developed, educationalists of other countries joined in, many happy intimacies were formed, visits were exchanged and a little Annual in four languages was carried on for two or three years; the whole of the heavy costs being borne by Mr. Stead. When, after his death, there was no one to finance the organization, the matter had become so important that Government Authorities instituted a Normal School exchanges, and the Modern Language Association took over the Scholars' Correspondence and the Exchange of Homes.

'Mr. Stead's "Baby Adoption" scheme originated in similar fashion. A lady wrote of her longing desire for a little one to care for; and soon affairs were in trim for such wants to be supplied. Lists of homeless ones were printed in the *Review of Reviews*, and Miss Burnett [1] entered into the scheme with enthusiasm. After a time, however, it was found that although the results were often delightful, the difficulties were too great for Mr. Stead's resources; a home to receive and care for the children whilst waiting was needed, some people wanted to have a child "on trial," now and again a mother found herself in better circumstances and wanted her child back; and so, reluctantly, the plan was given up. But the pioneer work was not useless; some children found happy homes, some husbands and wives a new interest in life, and later workers have profited by Miss Burnett's experiences.

'The promotion of Village Libraries was another interest. Mr. Stead established a central depot in London and appointed an organizing secretary. Lists of books were sent out for discussion and approval; strong boxes were made, and in many villages one person

[1] The lady whose memories have been printed on a previous page.

became responsible for the distribution and return of the books. In one such village the arrival of the new box was eagerly awaited and it proved a great success, many of the villagers paying the tiny subscription. But the costs were much heavier than was anticipated, and the subscription could not be raised. It was, by the way, at Mr. Stead's instigation that boxes had begun to be placed outside railway stations into which the newspapers and other literature could be dropped, volunteer helpers clearing the boxes and conveying the contents to the local hospitals. Of course Wimbledon was the first to be thus supplied and Mr. Stead's eldest son, Willie, then a boy, was an eager worker. This system, which dated from *Pall Mall Gazette* days, still survives, but the later Village Library Club had to be discontinued.

'The English-Speaker's Correspondence Club had a much longer life. Himself a member of a happy family circle, Mr. Stead always sympathized heartily with the lonely folk of the world, especially those in large towns and far-off lands. Individual readers of the *Review of Reviews* were put into communication with persons of similar tastes. The usual plan was for each correspondent to be known by a number.

'Envelopes were addressed to the number, not to the name, of the chosen acquaintance: these letters were sent to the London centre, and were then passed on by the Secretary to the proper recipient. Thus letters could be exchanged even for years without the writers becoming acquainted personally. Later the Little Quarterly, the *Round About*, provided an outlet for many solitary thinkers, the object of the Club being to bridge the gulf which divides so many who might have thought in common.

'The Cambridge House Garden-Parties – another of Mr. Stead's benevolent experiments – had a variety of uses. One gathering was utilized in amusing fashion. The people gathered on the Lawn belonged chiefly to Friendly Societies or Brotherhoods. Mr. Stead wanted guidance in the choice of pictures to be presented with his Christmas Annual. So a hundred or more specimen pictures were hung on ropes around the tennis court and each person was given twelve beans and asked to vote on the pictures by dropping a bean into a bag beneath the picture preferred.

'Several young people in the Wimbledon neighbourhood were leaving school, and the question came up "How should interest in

their studies be kept up?" So, as there were young folks in the Stead household, it was decided to have a fortnightly meeting at which each member should perform a new piece of music, or recite a poem, or relate an experience, etc. etc., Mr. Stead's only stipulation being that the sexes should be equal. Suburban places are always hotbeds of cliques. When tea should be announced, how should the boys and girls be paired? Mr. Stead had no difficulty: he called for a drawing-board and couples whose height was even went into tea together. The laughter excited by this novel method did away with all the stiffness, and the meeting thus inaugurated with fun and laughing, was the first of many happy gatherings.

'The use of Mr. Stead's private rooms in the *Review of Reviews* offices by workers who could not afford to pay for a meeting-place was yet another boon, as many grateful letters gave proof. For instance, the Head Mistress of a Board School in the North of London desired to keep in touch with her girls when they left at an age at which advice and sympathy were so much needed. This lady was enabled to form a little club, the members of which met one Saturday every month in "The Sanctum."

'It was in "The Sanctum" also that the International Auxiliary Language, "Esperanto," was introduced to English students. Passing through Leipzig in 1902, Mr. Stead met Professor Hartmann, one of the organizers of the Scholars' International Correspondence. This gentleman brought Esperanto to his notice. In September, Mr. Stead wrote an article on the subject, in the *Morning Leader*, and followed it up in the *Review of Reviews*; and in January of the next year a crowded meeting was held at Mowbray House, where the movement had its centre until funds were sufficient for a special office to be taken. Time alone will show the full results of Mr. Stead's efforts in this direction, but the wonderful progress of the Esperanto movement can be realized by those who will inquire at the headquarters of the British Esperanto Association. No less than 2,000 persons attended a recent congress at Prague to which several Governments, as well as the Committee of the League of Nations, sent delegates.'

After five years of strenuous work, accompanied by not a little financial anxiety at times, Stead had something like a nervous breakdown of health in 1895, and his doctor prescribed for him some months of quiet on the Riviera. This, however, became unnecessary

as Mrs. Stead discovered a very suitable resting-place for him on Hayling Island, where he soon became the owner of a much-loved country home, Holly Bush – two unpretentious looking little houses turned into one, with a pleasant garden and an uninterrupted outlook towards the sea. It is to Miss Lawrence, who was primarily governess to Stead's children, though she soon came to 'lend a hand' in the work of the office, that I am indebted also for this pleasant picture of the Hayling Island *ménage*:

'No biography of Mr. Stead would be complete without some account of the life led at the cottage at Hayling Island where he reigned supreme over a happy family circle. I went there first about March, 1896, and my first experience was to lose one of my small charges and to find to my horror that she had put out to sea in a cockle-shell of a boat with a small boy who had put up the sail. However, both came in safely, quite astonished at my fears for them.

'The gentle Mistress was not always at the cottage, but the kitchen mistress always was – capital Mrs. Bragg. All day some member of the noisy crew would be rushing in or out. Now it would be to ask insinuatingly, "Is it cake for lunch Baggie?" – for the time between breakfast and one o'clock dinner was too long for sea-air hunger. Or perhaps it was, "I've got to do my pump-duty Mrs. Bragg" – for happy work and happy play was the order of the household, neither idle hands nor idle minds being encouraged. As the water had to be pumped up, all took turns in pumping, the reward for so many strokes being sugar-plums which Mr. Stead distributed after dinner. Other duties were – fetching the newspapers and letters, weeding the garden, and now and again something special, such as cleaning the boat. Mr. Stead would call for volunteers and usually got too many offers. At one o'clock dinner, each child, beginning with the youngest, had to have a fact to tell – gathered from the daily papers. An elder, of course, helped the tiny ones and this necessitated a small store of facts for them, as no fact might be repeated. After dinner Mr. Stead – or in his absence, a substitute – read for an hour, sometimes a story newly published, or a new "Book for the Bairns" might be read and criticized. Alden's tales were favourites. The girls worked meanwhile and sometimes the boys too, even the little ones could cut the pages of new books. Once, for instance, the older boys had to sew some canvas pillow slips, for the pillow fights had been so vigorous

HOLLY BUSH, W. T. STEAD'S HAYLING ISLAND HOME

*From a photograph taken in* 1922, *by the author, with Master Henry Comyn Whyte, aged* 4, *at the entrance.*

that the Mistress had forbidden them unless a substitute for the frail slips could be found. Bathing went on at all hours, boating was eagerly looked forward to, and picnics were the crowning pleasure. Once in the summer holidays there would be a camp-out in a near-by desert island, and in that centre of varied currents risks were rarely absent. Once a boat-load with children got loose from its moorings and was travelling rapidly up the inlet to the open sea. Mr. Stead was at work on the house-boat, but flew along the shore and swimming out reached the boat just in time to swing himself on board and prevent a tragedy. A less alarming mishap was the stranding of the boat on the mud when the party had been picnicking – all had to wade ashore and walk home with bare and muddy feet, getting into the village at the same time as a party of fashionable arrivals!

'With his love for children, Mr. Stead could not have been happy himself without plenty of them around him, so during the holiday season the cottage was filled, not only with his own children, but with many others who needed change and sea air – little people gathered through the stories of sorrow to which his ears were always open. Of course the walls were not elastic, so in overflowing times the house-boat (made out of an old trawler) was utilized by the older visitors.

'Mr. Stead never broke a promise given to the children. Once the "tinies" had been promised that they should camp out the next night with "Father" instead of the big boys. Unfortunately, a cable came that very evening demanding "copy" by the morning mail. What was to be done? Well! Father had to write his copy on the house-boat in the midst of the children, whose chatter until bedtime, and tumbles out of hammocks during the night, would have been too much for any ordinary man. Even Mr. Stead was glad to be relieved at six o'clock in the morning when he was allowed to go home and finish and get a nap! His power to sleep at unusual times was often his salvation.

'Morning prayers were conducted in unique fashion. First a hymn in which Mr. Stead would sing lustily though not always tunefully; next, a prayer from the Common Prayer Book, followed by another hymn; and then a reading which each person chose in turn from something which had interested that person; Mrs. Bragg's little girl, for instance, once chose "Three little kittens went down the lane." Then came a prayer bringing in needs and thanksgivings, and the Lord's Prayer to finish. The choice of the children, of course, was

sometimes laughable, yet the reverence shown throughout the unconventional proceedings was a revelation to a new-comer.

'The Sundays, too, were exceptional. Breakfast was always porridge and eggs. Directly after breakfast drill was called, and all, boys, girls and elders alike, answered the call and went off to make beds, wash up crockery etc.; one particular Sunday Mr. Stead's younger daughter, aged four, dressed in her new winter frock, was found with black brooms and dustpan cleaning up the fireplace in Mr. Stead's study! Afterwards, all went to church or chapel – even Mrs. Bragg, who left the meat in the oven to cook itself. After the service all went for a sea-side walk, Mrs. Bragg returning to cook the vegetables. At dinner each person had to think of some person or thing mentioned in the sermon or reading, and the rest had to question it out after the fashion of the bird or beast game. After dinner Mr. Stead read for a while, the others going off "on their own" until tea-time – at this meal, by the way, neat dress, shoes and stockings were obligatory, while at dinner bare legs were allowed.

'Bicycles were in the stable, and also a strong tricycle which carried as many as seven on more than one occasion – no wonder the wheels sometimes buckled! The village children would call out for a ride on this tricycle if Mr. Stead were alone and, except when he was hurrying to the station or the post, seldom in vain.'

So far, Miss Lawrence. I am sure at least a hundred of Stead's friends could, from their own experience, bear out what is here said of that hospitable little Liberty Hall. There was an almost unceasing procession to it of London workers – journalists, novelists, artists, typists, all sorts and conditions of men and women needing change and rest. Miss Elizabeth L. Banks, the talented American writer, whose first book, *In Cap and Apron*, had won Stead's favour, was one of the many. Her experience was typical of all. 'One day I went to Mr. Stead's office,' Miss Banks writes me. 'I was breaking down under a very great mental strain and passing through a tragedy. I was hard up, too, as my worries had prevented my sleeping and working, but nobody in London knew that. Mr. Stead noticed how I looked at once and he said, without asking what was the matter, "American girl, you go home and pack your bag and meet me at the station at six o'clock. I'm going to send you off to my place at Hayling to stay a week or so. You're going to be ill." I did what he told me – it was no good refusing – and at the station I was surprised to find

that he had decided to accompany me. He took me to Hayling and left me there with his people, returning back to his work in London at once. He had actually taken that trip with me because he thought I was too ill to go to a strange place alone.'

* * *

We began with an American description of Stead in 1892. Another observer from the United States gives us a not less striking impression of him in 1899. This writer, the London correspondent of the *Spokane Review*, saw in Stead not a great man, not a man of genius, but an extraordinary man – extraordinary, above all, in being the archtype of his ordinary compatriots as they were to be found at the close of the nineteenth century. The passage is worth transcribing in full:

'It is a difficult matter to fix the position of a living man – to determine just what particular niche he will fill in the temple of Fame that the Future will prepare. Time makes many changes and it has made so many great men small and so many small men great during the years that have passed that one hesitates to affirm that a contemporary has succeeded in achieving a position from which the years will never remove him. When the Nineteenth Century has been lived, however, and the time has arrived for its historian to prepare its annals, there is one name that will certainly find a place in its pages, and that is the name of W. T. Stead, not that the London journalist has ever done anything sufficiently wonderful to entitle him to that honour, but because he is the perfect type of the nineteenth-century man.

'It is a part of the art of the cartoonist to be able to select the most striking features of his subject and to exaggerate them sufficiently to answer his purpose without destroying the likeness; and what the cartoonist is to the politicians of the world William T. Stead is to the English people of this generation. In him may be discovered all the striking characteristics of the race but exaggerated as never before in any one man.'

This view of Stead as a pre-eminently typical product of later Victorian England – a view of him which seems never to have occurred to Englishmen – tempts one to compare and contrast him with that unquestionable personification of his own country and his own time, Dr. Johnson. It is, of course, the points of contrast, both physical and mental, that strike one first. If one is looking for a modern counterpoise to Dr. Johnson, it would seem more natural to point –

as a sculptor or portrait-painter would point – to Mr. G. K. Chesterton; and it would certainly not be difficult to reconstruct out of our 'G.K.C.' with the loan of one or two essential ingredients from his friend Mr. Hilaire Belloc, a good deal of Johnson: Johnson the scholar, the wit, the talker for victory, the convivial tavern-frequenter, the roistering boon-companion of the flippant, worldly Beauclerk. In Stead there was very little of all this. He had brilliancy and high spirits and wonderful good-humour, but he was not a wit, still less a scholar; and although his immense circle of associates comprised several Beauclerks he never roistered with them. On the surface, it may be admitted, Johnson and Stead are quite singularly unlike, and yet if we look deeper it is curious to find how strong a resemblance may be traced between them in several respects: as Talkers, for instance, though Stead was not given to 'tossing and goring' his antagonists; as good Samaritans – the affinity here is very close; as Christian Moralists; and, above all, as Public Oracles.

Of Stead as talker we have had several accounts already. 'A brilliant and most entertaining talker,' the *Times* described him, 'full of vivacity, spontaneity and picturesque phrasing'; but 'his conversation was apt to be a monologue,' it added.[1] He was not, however, the kind of monologuist who resents interruption – he did not insist on finishing a period or even a sentence. There was give and take with him. He was, in fact, the arch-type of the ready-witted debater. A writer in *Answers*, some time in the nineties, thus described him:

'And I do assure the average man that William Thomas Stead, alias "Good old Stead," the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, and the friend of kings, princes, and governors, son of a Congregational minister, and sometime editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is, as human nature goes in these sombre times, a jolly fellow, a merry wag, a cheerful companion, a rollicking soul.

'See him sitting back in his chair after luncheon, his legs out-thrust under the littered table, his head thrown back, the red end of a cigarette singeing his moustache and beard, and hear him talk of the

[1] In the course of an obituary notice, April 18, 1912, the writer proceeds to say: 'He had a keen sense of fun, he enjoyed nothing more than a laugh against himself, and those who knew the man at closest quarters liked him best.' It is interesting to note that both the *Times* and *Answers* (not often thus placed in juxtaposition) were controlled by Lord Northcliffe, who in his younger days was much indebted to Stead for valuable help and counsel. Few people admired Stead more than Lord Northcliffe did.

world and its inhabitants with all the geniality of Pickwick, and with all the optimism of Wilkins Micawber. He talks about ghosts and emperors, about Prime Ministers and Salvation Army colonels, about actors and journalists, about automatic writings and peace conferences, about crystal-gazing and Imperial defence. He talks about none of these things furiously, intolerantly, and crankily, but he goes from one to the other easily and cheerfully, in the spirit of a diplomatist recounting reminiscences in every corner of the globe – a born raconteur, an inspired chatterbox.'

Here, from the pen of my friend, Miss S. K. Huntsman, is a capital sketch of Stead, not as a talker exactly but as a public speaker. It really made very little difference to him where he spoke or talked. 'Stage fright' was a thing absolutely unknown to him. He was equally at his ease whether addressing a single auditor or an assemblage of five thousand people. Miss Huntsman's memories are of a later date than the 'nineties, but they come appropriately here:

'It was the exuberant vitality of the man that overwhelmed anyone who had not met him before at close quarters. On the platform of a large hall he was always a personality, a force; but in a room he was dominant – if only temporarily.

'There was one February afternoon when pacifist folk assembled in the house of Felix Moscheles to celebrate International Peace Day. Low-toned pictures, glints of gold on frames and books, the panelled walls and wooden gallery of the studio, with here and there a bronze bust or a rich vase, formed an unusual setting for a political meeting; and perhaps its charm added to the lassitude which the overheated atmosphere induced in the audience. The speeches of Mr. Percy Alden, Mr. Zangwill, Major-General Sir Alfred Turner, and others proceeded in leisurely course. Then . . . a footstep, a shifting of crowded chairs, and a whisper "Stead!" He climbed, literally, to the dais, grasped extended hands, and spoke. Men and women, intent, leaned forward, though his strong, clear voice was audible in the remotest corner. Their brains became vibrant with motion: an electric fan was whirling the stagnant air.

'His speech was, as usual, captious, combative, personal, but arresting. He leaped over the face of the globe as though on a pogo-stick, and always in the company of the great. "I have talked with as many sovereigns as would consent to meet me, and as many diplo-

matists as I had time to see," he said. But in five minutes he had outlined a definite plan, driven it home clearly to his hearers' minds, and forced them to accept it.'

Mr. Arnold White, who knew Stead well, and who agreed with him cordially about naval matters, while disagreeing with him no less cordially about almost everything else, admired him more as a public speaker than as a talker.

'Staying at the Vice-Regal Lodge in Dublin,' he wrote me, 'during the first of Lord Aberdeen's Viceroyalties, I had much conversation about Mr. Stead. The character of his mind was debated by Lord – then Mr. John–Morley, who had been his chief. No satisfactory word occurred to anyone at first, but as we rose to leave the room to go to luncheon, I suggested the word "nimble" to Mr. Morley as characterizing Mr. Stead's mind. He accepted it with alacrity and said it was the exact word. The "nimble eagerness" with which Stead asserted and supported the exact opposite of views that he had formerly put forth,' Mr. White goes on to say, 'left no doubt as to his sincerity.'[1] In Stead's speeches, however, Mr. White found something more than mere 'nimbleness':

'As a public speaker Stead was matchless. Excepting Mrs. Besant I have heard no one of his generation who exerted so deadly a power in capturing the attention and the agreement of an audience. Whether he was wrong or right he was always absolutely certain that what he said was not only right but the will of God, and that he was supported by a host of ministering angels.

'Stead's oratory was not rhetorical. Its force came from conviction and sincerity – for the time being at all events. Stead's tongue and pen have dinted his generation as no other journalist has done.'

The resemblance between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Stead as 'Oracles' in the popular modern sense of the word is particularly worth noting. No less a personage than Lord Morley has used this very expression in regard to Stead; readers of Boswell will recall how the Rev. Dr. Maxwell, 'of Falkland, in Ireland,' applied it to Dr. Johnson. 'He seemed to me,' wrote Dr. Maxwell, 'to be considered a kind of publick oracle whom everybody thought they had a right to visit and consult.' It was the Horace Greeley type of oracle, not the Johnson

[1] See in this connection Stead's remarks, Vol. I, p. 40, and my own about Stead, Vol. II, pp. 88–92.

type, that Lord Morley had in mind. He used, he tells us,[1] to remind Stead of Greeley's marvellous hold upon the American public and say to him: 'It is in your power, with your gifts, to play the same part in this country.' But Stead, really, was *both* kinds of oracle. He doubled the *rôles*.

It is amusing to compare and contrast Dr. Maxwell's picture of Johnson in this connection with some of the many which have been painted of Stead:

'His general mode of life during my acquaintance (Dr. Maxwell wrote) seemed to be pretty uniform. About twelve o'clock I commonly visited him and frequently found him in bed, or declaiming over his tea, which he drank very plentifully. He generally had a levee of morning visitors, chiefly men of letters; Hawkesworth, Goldsmith, Murphy, Langton, Steevens, Beauclerk, etc., etc., and sometimes learned ladies; particularly I remember a French lady of wit and fashion doing him the honour of a visit. He seemed to me to be considered a kind of public oracle whom everybody thought they had a right to visit and consult; and doubtless they were well rewarded. I never could discover how he found time for his compositions. He declaimed all the morning, then went to dinner at a tavern, where he commonly stayed late, and then drank his tea at some friend's house, over which he loitered a great while but seldom took supper. I fancy he must have read and wrote chiefly in the night, for I can scarcely recollect that he ever refused going out with me to a tavern and he often went to Ranelagh which he deemed a place of innocent recreation.'

'The most accessible and the most communicative man alive,' Dr. Maxwell proceeds to style Dr. Johnson, and the words apply with equal truth to Stead. 'When I go to London,' Sir Starr Jameson, the famous 'Dr. Jim,' once said to a friend,[2] 'I always take the first opportunity to see Stead. He puts me more quickly into touch with current events and English political life than anyone. I sit in his big arm-chair at Mowbray House and tell him to put me up. Stead plunges his hands in his pockets – paces up and down his office, his head eagerly bent forward. I sit an interested listener – in one hour I have learnt more from him than from any man in London.'

[1] Lord Morley's speech at the banquet to Sir E. T. Cook, 1912.
[2] Cited in a letter in the *British Weekly*, April, 1912.

Hundreds of other such visitors could tell the same tale – statesmen, diplomatists, soldiers, sailors, travellers, men of science, men of letters, men of all nationalities and almost as many women as men; but that Mowbray House 'Sanctum' was, if possible, even more open to the humble and the obscure. Stead's was 'the readiest ear in all London in which to pour a tale of injustice or sorrow of any kind,' says Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe.[1] 'Doubtless he was often imposed upon, but it was a beautiful and refreshing feature of his in a profession so notoriously *blasé* and cynical as journalism. Oppressed races, ill-treated animals, underpaid typists, out-at-heel pressmen, misunderstood women, persecuted parsons, vilified public men, would-be suicides, hot-gospellers of every brand and sort, lonely city souls and, of course, childless parents – how he championed them all and loved them all!'

Dr. Johnson held his levees at home and at his favourite tavern. Stead liked to have his friends to lunch with him, but our modern equivalents for the tavern – and for Ranelagh – had very little part in his life. His home, however, opened its doors as widely as his office.

'At Wimbledon, at Mowbray House, and of late years at his home in Smith Square, Westminster (Mr. Ratcliffe continues), you would meet people from the ends of the earth, and you never knew what good fortune might be yours. There was no such thing as formality. The host himself had the high spirits of a boy. Indians were especially welcome. Every public man from India found his way to the house, and nothing was more characteristic of Stead than the way in which, amid unbroken hilarity and the most elaborate fooling, he would cross-examine a visitor in reference to his mission in England, or the condition of things in the country from which he came. You would think it perhaps part of the Sunday afternoon game in the cosmopolitan sitting-room, carried on merely for the entertainment of the group whose members had come together from the seven seas – until you saw in the next number of the *Review of Reviews* either a character-sketch setting forth the visitor's record and aims, or else an interview into which all the stuff of the cross-examination had been compressed. His power of extracting and stating a case was probably unsurpassed in our time.'

[1] In the *Modern Review* (Calcutta), July, 1912.

I shall conclude with these words from the pen of Mr. J. A. Spender, one of Stead's closest friends for more than twenty years, who depicts him in very much the same light:

'As you watched him through a normal day (Mr. Spender writes),[1] you wondered when he could find time to put pen to paper, let alone to keep that incessant stream of journalism flowing in the English and American newspapers. But he was a demon for work, with a pen in his hand or a shorthand writer to dictate to, his speed was enormous. Never have I known him so busy as not to find time for patient listening to the story of any human being in distress, and no one so readily gave his sympathy or loosened his purse-strings.

'The stolid Englishman is puzzled by a man of this temperament, and I have often wondered from what forbears he got his more than Celtic fervour. But with it all, he was a man of extraordinary grasp of detail and precision. Hardly ever have I known him wrong about a fact, and his power of reducing masses of detail to brief and lucid statements was unequalled. Give him the biggest Blue-book, and he would have the heart out of it in half an hour, and a luminous summary omitting nothing of any importance, going to press within the hour. His articles were like hewing a straight path through a tangled forest. There might be woods and bogs to right and left, but he troubled nothing about them, so long as his own path was clear. His talk made much more allowance than his writing for the complexity of things, and there was no better critic in London of other people's views. Pose a question, and he would talk it out from a dozen points of view with the keenest sense of its complications. His remarkable memory and unfailing store of apt illustration gave point and glow to his talk and, fanatic as people counted him to be, he was absolutely free from any rancour about anybody's opinions. His open-mindedness was almost a perversity. There was no opinion, however fantastic or remote from probability, to which he would not give a charitable hearing, and which might not, in certain circumstances, effect a lodgement in his own mind. Where his "spooks" were concerned he would believe anything, and no disproof of any reported fact or failure of any prediction made by his familiar spirits to come true seemed to have the slightest effect on the confidence he reposed in them.'

[1] In the *Westminster Gazette*, April 17, 1912.

## CHAPTER 20

# THE VENEZUELA DISPUTE. STEAD'S CAMPAIGN IN FAVOUR OF ANGLO-AMERICAN ARBITRATION

*January – March*, 1896

'You seem to have been pretty nearly the only person on this side who marked the rising of the black cloud,' wrote Mr. Bryce[1] to Stead with reference to Venezuela on January 8, 1896.

Hitherto Bryce's name has occurred only once in this narrative, but he and Stead had been staunch friends and ardent allies since 1878. They had been in close agreement about most things and were to remain so until Stead's death. Perhaps there was no British statesman of Cabinet rank who, from first to last, sympathized so generally and so thoroughly with Stead's social and political ideas as Bryce: they saw almost 'eye to eye' in regard to Ireland, South Africa, the Near East; and everyone knows how untiringly they both fought in their different ways for the great cause of Arbitration – for International Arbitration as the only possible way of securing the peace of the world, but above all for Arbitration between the British Empire and the United States as a safeguard against that most terrible of wars – a war between brothers. That the Briton and the American must be held to be brothers was almost as much Bryce's creed as it was Stead's.

I had hoped to be able to enrich this book, and perhaps this very chapter, with some pages from Lord Bryce's pen. Not very long before he died, he promised to record for me anything of interest that he could recall with regard to Stead; at the moment he was too absorbed with urgent work which he had in hand. I was to have written to him again just about the time when death came to him so suddenly. It had been arranged that I should send him such of his letters to Stead as had been preserved, so that a re-reading of them might refresh his memory.

Quite a large proportion of these letters date from the early months of 1896. A few sentences from them will serve as a sort of introduction to our chronicle of Stead's doings in that year – the year of the quarrel over Venezuela and of the Jameson Raid; they contain allusions to the Raid and to Cecil Rhodes, as well as other burning

[1] The Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P., afterwards Lord Bryce.

questions of the hour, such as the tragic plight of the Armenians,[1] but most of them are concerned chiefly with Venezuela and with Stead's strenuous attempt to set on foot a permanent Court of Arbitration before which all Anglo-American dissensions in the future should come for settlement.

Writing on January 10, Bryce welcomes Stead's proposal, as first sketched out, though he feels that he himself as an ex-Minister may be debarred from giving active help if Lord Salisbury discountenances the idea.

Matters looked really serious already. An intense war feeling existed in many parts of the United States – there was a widespread belief, as some one expressed it, 'that England could be beaten and needed a beating.' Large sections of the American public, Mr. Balfour, in tones of rather unwise irony, had remarked in a speech at Manchester,[2] seemed 'to regard a war with this country as a thing to be lightly indulged in, an exhilarating exercise, a gentle national stimulus.' Bryce, like Stead, was in constant touch with Americans of all shades of political thought, and was able to gauge the situation. On February 27 he declares Stead's scheme to be 'even more needed than one thought at first,' and he rejoices to see that 'it is being warmly taken up in the United States by the right sort of people.'

On March 3 a meeting was to be held at the Queen's Hall in furtherance of the proposal. Bryce wrote a strong letter in its support. As the carefully-worded deliverance of one who was later to occupy so unique a place in the esteem and affections of Americans, this document retains a peculiar interest; I give it in full:

'To my regret I am prevented by a previous engagement from attending the meeting this evening. I need not tell you how heartily I sympathize with its object. Britain and America are little likely to be embroiled over any matter of material interest alone, so incalculable are the evils which a war must bring upon both. The danger rather springs from pride and passion driving the nations into a position from which each may think that it cannot with honour recede; and the value of a permanent tribunal of arbitration lies in the fact that by providing a means of settlement, competent to adjust

[1] 'Poor Armenia!' he exclaimed in one letter; 'she will be forgotten and her people exterminated, while all these questions which are matters of interest, and not "merely" of humanity and Christianity, hold the foreground!'

[2] January 15, 1896.

each and every dispute, it may be trusted to keep passion from rising and to appease the sentiment of honour which cannot suffer by following the method of solution agreed to before the dispute arose and obeying the decision it had bound itself in anticipation to respect. Even if a question were occasionally to arise which seemed to fall outside the limits fixed by a general arbitration treaty, the habit of relying upon arbitration which the existence of such a treaty would create, and the existence of an impartial body able to work for conciliation, would immensely diminish the risks of a breach. As there could be no heavier blow dealt at civilization than a conflict between the two kindred peoples who have done most to civilize the world, so no example of the substitution of arbitration for war would be so effective as that which those peoples might set by establishing a court standing always ready to deal with differences before they had ripened into quarrels.'

* * *

In saying that Stead had been 'pretty nearly the only person' who had foreseen the trouble over Venezuela, Bryce had in mind probably an outspoken article which his friend had contributed to the *Contemporary Review* in September 1895 entitled 'Jingoism in America'; and also a series of similar warnings in the *Review of Reviews*.

Some days before the 'Fourth of July' of that year, the *Times-Herald* of Chicago, one of the most influential and enterprising of all the newspapers in the United States, had published replies from a number of 'distinguished men, qualified to speak on the subject of American foreign policy,' to a couple of questions, the mere propounding of which was significant:

'1. Should the United States annex Canada, Newfoundland, Cuba and Hawaii?

'2. Will Uncle Sam eventually rule the North American continent?'

The Editor of the *Times-Herald* felt that his questions came opportunely at that moment: the 'Fourth of July,' he said, 'is the date when the American spirit is dominant. It is the time when the devotion of the patriot is most manifest.'

Stead, in his *Contemporary* article, cited two of the replies: that of ex-Senator John J. Ingalls, of Kansas, and that of Senator Lodge, of Massachusetts.

Ex-Senator Ingalls was a *soi-disant* 'anti-Jingo.' He had opposed the contemplated annexation of Hawaii as vehemently as Mr. Labouchere had opposed our own campaign against Lobengula. He had said: 'the "Jingo," the aggressive, domineering advocate of a swaggering foreign policy, has never been a favourite in American politics.' But now, in the course of his answer to the questions, he was able to declare: 'The annexation of Canada would not violate the traditions of our history and would be in accordance with the impulse of federation which is the irresistible tendency of the Anglo-American race'; and to maintain that the Panama Canal must be 'our Southern boundary.'

'For an anti-Jingo,' Stead commented, this programme, involving as it did the annexation not only of Canada but of Mexico and Central America as far as the Canal, was 'pretty strong!'

Senator Lodge's view was very similar to ex-Senator Ingalls', though more guardedly expressed. 'Looking at the entire matter in the abstract,' he said, 'and as an answer to a hypothetical question, I should say that Cuba should be annexed and also Canada, Newfoundland and Hawaii.'

Dr. Albert Shaw, the Editor of the American *Review of Reviews* (which had become increasingly independent of the parent periodical, although still an organ of Anglo-American friendship), was Stead's next witness. Dr. Shaw was certainly not a Jingo, Stead explained – not even a politician, 'excepting so far as all good citizens are politicians'; and yet in relation to the two matters upon which the American Jingoes were most wrath he had 'seriously and earnestly' supported them: these two matters were (1) the difference of view regarding the Venezuelan frontier and (2) the recent disciplinary action which Great Britain had considered herself forced to take in Nicaragua. Dr. Shaw had expressed himself as follows upon the latter point:

'It is true that we have not thought it wise to declare a formal protectorate over Nicaragua; but it would have been gracious and courteous if John Bull had recognized the relationship that circumstances have virtually created, and had frankly avowed the policy of doing nothing in Nicaragua which would not be most eminently agreeable to the Government and people of the United States.'

Stead's comment upon Dr. Shaw's contentions is an indication of the wide breach in political matters now opening between the two men:

'I don't propose to discuss here (he says) this extraordinary theory as to the suggested obligation under which we lie, as a matter of grace and courtesy, to do nothing to defend our own interests, or to punish flagrant breaches of international law, whenever the "minute and defenceless" offenders live in "our American hemisphere." The more astounding such a claim appears, the more significant it is to find it gravely propounded in such a quarter.'

The affair of Nicaragua was a thing of the past, however. The indemnity claimed by Great Britain had been paid and the incident had been closed. It was far otherwise with the question of Venezuela. In regard to this, also, Dr. Shaw, – in common with other representatives of moderate opinion in the States – had spoken strongly. Referring to 'great and valuable portions' of Venezuela which seemed to have been 'encroached upon by Great Britain,' he had said:

'Beginning with a trading post or two on the coast, the English have extended their claims until they now assert authority over a great region which was formerly regarded by everybody as an integral portion of Venezuela. Far from increasing their territorial claims on the north coast of South America, the British ought by all means to prepare definitely to withdraw altogether. It is wholly contrary to the ethics of modern international relations that a European power like Great Britain should hold by force of arms a region that belongs naturally to the home territory of a friendly nation.'

Stead went on to cite some equally forcible language which Senator Lodge had used in the *North American Review*. England, Senator Lodge complained, had declined arbitration, which was particularly applicable to a boundary dispute, and while declining it, she had continued to seize the lands of a weak power by superior force, on the principle that 'might makes right.' 'The supremacy of the Monroe doctrine,' Senator Lodge had gone so far as to declare, 'should be established and at once, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must. It will be the duty and the privilege of the next Congress to see that this is done.'

To Stead, as to ninety-nine Englishmen in a hundred, these aggressive words seemed astonishing, and while they had the good effect of causing him to investigate the whole question with all his wonderful energy and open-mindedness, he could not entirely refrain at first

from some hot retorts. He began, in this *Contemporary* article, merely by summarizing, with much point and vigour, the British case. The Monroe doctrine, he declared, could not apply to this particular dispute, for the Monroe doctrine started from the *status quo* in 1823. Long before 1823, Great Britain had owned 'as a matter of treaty-right by international law all the territory up to the watershed of the Orinoco.' There had never been, and there was not then, 'any question of extending British authority one single yard beyond the boundary laid down as far back as 1797.' The only question in dispute was how much of this territory, undeniably British, Great Britain should now agree to cede to Venezuela. The United States Government, he complained, had suggested more or less formally, that the question as to the frontier should be submitted to arbitration. To this, Great Britain had replied, quite correctly, that she was quite ready to arbitrate regarding the territory which could legitimately be said to be in dispute. All that she had refused to do was to arbitrate 'upon the claim which, judging from Venezuelan sharp practice, might suddenly be extended to cover the whole of British Guiana.' Now, Senator Lodge and Dr. Shaw and many other American spokesmen of weight and influence were evidently not satisfied with that; they wanted the arbitration to cover the question 'whether or not the whole of British Guiana should be handed over to the Republic of Venezuela.' This, he maintained, was not to be considered for a moment. We could no more arbitrate on that question than we could on the question whether the Isle of Wight belonged to us, or any more than the United States could be asked to arbitrate 'whether Florida should continue to belong to the Union or be handed over to Cuba.'

But not content with this argumentative vehemence, Stead had enough of the ordinary Englishman in his nature to impel him into some 'back-chat' also! It was a familiar trick in the Old World, he observed, to make war abroad in order to retard reform at home, and 'the corrupter elements in American democracy' were not above taking the hint from the effete empires and monarchies of Europe. That was a remark which the American spokesmen could not be expected to relish in such a context; and in a character-sketch which followed in the *Review of Reviews* for January 1896, there were other such reflections not less calculated to hurt their susceptibilities. Stead was trying harder than almost any other Englishman to under-

stand the American point of view, but with how little success as yet a letter preserved among his papers enables us to gauge. It is from a New York friend, a man of whose judgment he thought highly and who had been seeking to keep him *au courant* with opinion in the States. The writer complains that, when using the facts thus communicated to him, Stead has given them in a manner 'so garbled as entirely to distort them'; both in the *Contemporary* and in the *Review of Reviews*, he declares, Stead has 'dodged' material points and 'pettifogged most scandalously'; and he gives an account of the whole situation as regards both Venezuela and British Guiana in violent contrast with the conception of it held by Stead in common with Englishmen generally. He admits that President Cleveland's second Message to Congress had been unfortunate in its mode of expression, but he maintains that Cleveland has the whole of the United States behind him and that while there was 'no shadow of unrighteousness' in the American contentions, Lord Salisbury's reply to the American Secretary of State, Mr. Olney, had had '*diabolical wickedness in almost every line of it.*'

I cannot, of course, find room here for even a summary of President Cleveland's Message or of that 'diabolical' composition of our own Prime Minister – in the eyes of most people in England it had seemed a very mild and reasonably-worded document. Stead's extracts from them in small type, as embodied in his character-sketch of Cleveland, filled several pages of the *Review of Reviews*. Even at this stage – when he was planning out his campaign in favour of arbitration – his methods remained a bit provocative. He heads one of Cleveland's statements derisively, 'It must be Right, for it suits us!' and another, 'If not International Law, it ought to be!' We need not now consider how far he was justified in his view of Cleveland as an unreasonable chauvinist upon this occasion. What is worth noting is that even this most ardent preacher of Anglo-American Brotherhood could not refrain just yet from a vigorous punch or two at his American brother's head!

But that mood passed, and in the penny pamphlet of seventy-six pages, entitled *Always Arbitrate before you Fight*, published in the following month, Stead not only holds the scales more evenly between the two antagonists but shows himself prepared to expand the field of arbitration as far as the Americans may desire. The pamphlet opens thus:

'The misunderstanding which has occurred between the two great sections of the English-speaking race summons us all to consider whether the time has not come for perfecting the peace-keeping arrangements between the United States and the United Kingdom. Heretofore we have been content to rub along, taking no thought as to the morrow, but trusting that whenever a difficulty or a hitch arose, the two nations would be able to improvise a way out. Now, however, it seems as if we can no longer afford to trust the permanent peace of two peoples, which are annually increasing at such a rate as to come into closer and closer friction with each other in all parts of the world, to the chance handling of politicians who may, on the spur of the moment, be summoned to deal with the most delicate and dangerous of controversies in the midst of an atmosphere charged with latent thunder by the dynamos of the press. The dispute that in the last six weeks brought us to discussing war as a possible contingency is a notable object-lesson on the need of some arrangement or simple device by which these misunderstandings could be promptly and quietly removed.'

The two English-speaking nations, he proceeds to say, have been brought to the verge of war through mutual misunderstanding. What is to be done to prevent in future a danger so dreadful? What is to be done and by whom? The House of Commons and both houses of Congress have declared with unanimity in favour of Arbitration, but there matters have remained. It is manifest that practical efforts must at once be made to turn this pious opinion into a practical reality. As a first step he has, with the help of a representative Committee, drafted a Memorial earnestly appealing for the conclusion of a 'treaty arrangement by which all disputes between Great Britain and the United States could be referred for the adjudication to some permanent tribunal representing both nations,' and he now appeals to the public for signatures to this Memorial and for every other form of support.

A page expounding the doctrine which he had condensed into the five words of his little book deserves to be transcribed in full – it was the doctrine which he continued to preach unceasingly, in season and out of season, until the day of his death:

'The proposal is that before fighting, before even talking of fighting, the English-speaking nations must always arbitrate. If we must fight

at the end, let us at least arbitrate at the beginning. The time has surely come when we can as a race declare that war is so terrible a thing we shall never resort to it, never even talk of resorting to it, until the *casus belli*, whatever it may be, has been duly submitted and solemnly adjudicated upon by an impartial arbitration court, which shall hear both sides fully, and place on record its deliberate award.

'This is not to propose that we should cast away the sword; it is only to insist we shall not unsheathe it until, before some tribunal more judicial and less diabolical than that of war, we have done our utmost to prove our quarrel just. "Always arbitrate before you fight." We can always fight afterwards if the award is idiotic, or the arbitrators cannot agree, or if we choose to make our own will our sole law; but in that case we must stand the brunt of the odium justly attaching, in the eyes of the world, to a Power that goes to war in a cause upon the justice of which a tribunal of its own choosing has pronounced an adverse verdict.

'This rule must be universal. All disputes which might lead to war must first go to arbitration, just as all claims between citizens, no matter how preposterous they may be, must always be heard in Court, and not decided by assault and battery. Any man can command at any time a legal inquiry into my right to own even the shirt on my back; for it is the very foundation of civil law that every citizen has a right to compel any other to prove his title to anything he possesses which the other chooses to claim. Only by that means was the right of private war abolished. Only if we reject it we must take the consequences. And as in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred there would be no motive for rejecting it, the immediate result would be that if everything was arbitrated about, our present risk of war would be reduced by 99 per cent.

'Without this clear and explicit reservation of the right to appeal from the award of the arbitrator to the sword, in cases where such a course seemed demanded by the national honour and the national safety, no nation will ever refer to arbitration any question vital to its honour and its existence. Yet these are precisely those questions which it is most important to get before an impartial tribunal.'

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Demonstrations in Public Halls, often so exciting at the moment, are generally dull affairs to read about long afterwards. The great meeting at which the Anglo-American Arbitration campaign was

launched on March 3, 1896, is no exception to the rule. We need not concern ourselves with its proceedings. Even the letters of sympathy and support, although they made a brave enough muster that month in the *Review of Reviews*, do not claim much attention now. Most of them were trite and commonplace – tepid approvals from a dozen Bishops and from Members of Parliament preoccupied with a thousand other matters. Lord Rosebery and Mr. Asquith were among the few who wrote with conviction: Herbert Spencer and William Watson among the few who said things worth saying. It was evidently for Stead and his small band of real enthusiasts to carry through the fight by themselves.

What exactly did their untiring energies count for in the subsequent progress of the dispute and in its settlement in the November of that year? It is, of course, difficult to say. Lord Salisbury would doubtless have made very little of their intervention – if indeed he did not regard it as inopportune and mischievous. Present-day historians are inclined to ignore the movement as of no account. Will it seem of more importance to posterity? Here is Stead's own claim, put forward boldly and plainly in that autobiographical retrospect from which I have already quoted more than once:

'By public meetings and memorials we succeeded in producing such an expression of public opinion in favour of arbitration that Lord Salisbury gave way and the question was amicably settled by reference to a Court of Arbitration subsequently held in Paris. Of course I could have done nothing in these things without the loyal and enthusiastic support which was given me by such men as Mr. W. Randal Cremer, of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, and Dr. Darby, of the Peace Society.'

# CHAPTER 21

# THE JAMESON RAID

## I

### STEAD AND DR. JAMESON

It has often been declared of Stead that he had a wonderful faculty for being equally violent in opposition and in defence of the self-same cause within an incredibly short space of time. As a general accusation this does not seem to me to be well founded; certainly I can see but very little evidence to support it in Stead's record down to the end of 1895. One may, however, confess that the Arch-Pacifist and pro-Boer whom most of us remember so well is not to be recognized at a first glance in the apologist for the Jameson Raid. With admiration for 'Dr. Jim's' fine qualities we can all sympathize, and we may agree that many who condemned the Raid so virtuously would have been among the first to exult had it been successful, but one reads nowadays with just a little astonishment some of the things Stead wrote in this connection in 1896.

His first feelings over the incident, as expressed in the *Review of Reviews* for January of that year, had been the same as most people's – 'blank amazement and profound regret,' accompanied by 'some not unnatural indignation.' It was inexplicable to him, he declared, that Dr. Jameson, the 'careful, long-headed, prudent, sagacious administrator,' the man 'whom we all liked so much and trusted so fully,' could have made so fatal a mistake. And readers of the Review had the whole situation put before them very clearly and fairly as Stead saw it; the actual circumstances of the Transvaal, with its oligarchy of 15,000 adult males governing absolutely a country as large as Spain, inhabited by not more than 500,000 persons, of whom 250,000 were natives; the admitted hardships and wrongs of the 600,000 'Uitlanders,' mostly English, in Johannesburg, which had been a mere mining camp a few years before, but which was now a great industrial centre; the Uitlanders' constitutionally-expressed demands for citizenship and the stubborn old President's refusal of it; and finally Cecil Rhodes's own opinion, as given to Stead two months before, that there *need* be no revolution, though there *might* be; that things would right themselves if they were only left alone; that English ideas and education would lead pacifically but irresistibly to

the establishment of a Transvaal Republic upon the regular foundation of a modern democratic state. 'Safely and slow; Let things alone; Time is on our side.' These, according to Stead, had been Rhodes's watchwords down to the beginning of December 1895.

All this was written on January 3 – before we heard in England of the Kaiser's congratulatory telegram to President Kruger. Stead at this date could only conjecture the motives underlying Jameson's rash action. 'What seems clear,' he said, 'is that the Chartered Company, with Mr. Rhodes's approval, and with the knowledge of everyone in South Africa, mustered 800 men on the Transvaal frontier, expecting that when the anticipated revolution took place at Johannesburg, they might be needed to prevent massacre and restore order. While waiting there, unknown to Mr. Rhodes, and contrary to all expectation, Dr. Jameson suddenly invaded the Transvaal, fearing, probably, from private intelligence, that if he did not rush, there and then, the situation might change for the worst so much as to render a pacific solution impossible. Therein he was misinformed. His miscalculation has cost him dear, and not him only.'

But when news came of what the Kaiser had been saying and doing, – not merely congratulating the Boers on the way in which they had maintained 'the independence' of their country 'against foreign aggression,' but actually pressing the Portuguese Government to let him march an armed force into the Transvaal as an anti-British demonstration, – the whole matter took on an entirely new aspect, and the tones in which Stead discusses it are singularly un-pacific. He rejoices in the Kaiser's indiscretion 'as a tonic and stimulant to British public opinion,' and records with pride that it evoked 'an outburst of unmistakable national passion.' 'Jameson's Raid,' he says, 'has passed into the background.' Jameson had blundered, no doubt, but he had 'unmasked an ambush the very existence of which we had not suspected.'

'We don't want to fight,' ran the famous music-hall song, 'but by Jingo, if we do! . . .'

Stead's summing up of this episode reads amusingly like a prose paraphrase. 'None in Britain wished for war,' he declared, 'all of us from the highest to the lowest regarded it with a horror too deep for words' . . . but –

'There was no flinching, no shrinking, no paltering with our trust.

If we were attacked, we would defend ourselves, please God! and do what in us lay to defend the right; and if so be as all our quondam allies forsook us and fled, well then we must e'en defend ourselves alone with such help as would come to us from the unseen. Not until empires and men find themselves in a tight place is it possible to ascertain the stuff of which they are made. Last month we were in a tight place, a very tight place, and, even our enemies being judges, we stood the test.'

And he remained of the same mind throughout the whole of 1896. Listen to him in his Christmas retrospect of the year's events:

'Dr. Jameson and his friends in Africa and London builded more wisely than they knew. The moment Dr. Jameson crossed the frontier he forced the hand of the Boers, who by their instant appeal to Germany for assistance unmasked a conspiracy which had been diligently promoted for years past.

'The German Emperor's telegram, which in itself might have been ignored, was as the torch thrust into the pile of faggots which in olden times was prepared on every beacon hill to warn the nation of the approach of the foe. Now, as in olden times, the war-flame spread from peak to peak until the alarm reached the capital, when –

"With one start and with one cry, the royal city woke."

So England roused herself in the early days of the New Year, when from Berlin came that unlooked-for challenge of our right to pre-eminent domain in South Africa. War is so hateful, that even the contemplation of its possibility is painful to any humane mind; but nothing for many years in our recent history added so much to our national consciousness, not only of our Imperial strength, but of our unanimous resolve to exert all our strength in defence of challenged rights, than the outburst of indignation which followed the revelation of the German complot in the Transvaal. Once for all it was made manifest throughout the length and breadth, not only of the continent of Africa, but of all the continents, that Britain was Britain still, and that in the defence of her Imperial position she would no longer stand alone. European allies she might have none, but from the East and the West, from the North and the South, wherever men of English speech had founded commonwealths which enjoyed British freedom under British law, there came forth warm-hearted words of

sympathy and unsolicited offers of succour, until the Mother Isle was seen to be surrounded and defended by the stalwart progeny with which she had peopled the waste places of the world. For that great moment of inspiration, for that apocalyptic vision of the new English-speaking world which had been created by our hundred years of colonizing labour, it were well worth while to pay the price of a dozen Jameson Raids. For long years the Genius of England had appeared to many of the most patriotic amongst us to have been somewhat, to borrow Milton's metaphor, like an eagle in the moult. But no sooner did the call to arms by the "bugle's note and cannon's roar" fall upon our ears, than once more, like Milton's eagle, she renewed her mighty youth, and asserted what every Englishman at heart believes to be her natural and destined place in the community of nations. "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just," and in the attempt to oust us from the suzerainty over the Transvaal – the only thing which we had retained for ourselves when we surrendered all other sovereignty over that State – we were freed from any misgivings if, which God forbid, we had been forced to defend our right hand. There were some bitter moments, no doubt, but as colony after colony sent in its messages of cheer and promises of support, men did not need to have much imagination or feeling to see in the strangely altered scene something like the political realization of Lowell's magnificent image, when speaking, not of the national embodiment of the cause of Liberty and Right, he said:

> '"Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong
> And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
> Troops of beautiful tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong." '

At a first glance, as I have said, the foregoing outburst may surprise one a little, but on reflection we shall see that they are not, after all, so incompatible with Stead's subsequent pro-Boerism. As to their war-like flavour! – well, Stead was never for 'Peace at any price.' Peace was his ultimate aim, to be worked for unceasingly, untiringly; but, until others could be got to listen, the British Empire must be ready and fully equipped to resist all foes, the German Emperor not least among them.

Pro-Boerism, in the sense in which Stead preached and practised it, was not in his own view justifiable at the time of the Raid – the Raid

itself did not seem to him to justify it: the Boers had made their own way in South Africa by raiding, and the 'moral meridian' of the Transvaal was not that of Europe. I shall have occasion presently to cite a number of passages in which, even when his pro-Boer sympathies were most pronounced, he condemned as trenchantly as any believer in Liberalism and the Franchise could desire the Boer Government's despotic treatment of the Uitlanders. There can scarcely be a doubt that had he himself been living at Johannesburg, he would have given President Kruger more trouble than all the other Uitlanders put together. It was as the result of Mr. Chamberlain's stupid bullying of the old President that Stead, from being one of the severest censors of the Boers, became presently their warmest sympathizer and most strenuous champion.

## II

### STEAD AND CHAMBERLAIN

Stead's acquaintances used to say, especially at this period, that he hated Chamberlain. That hundreds of thousands of people hated Chamberlain there can be no doubt. He had many virtues and many staunch friends; Lord Morley, who knew him so long and so well, was able to say of him with affection: 'We were like brothers.' But it is difficult to think of any modern politician who, in public life, aroused such cordial detestation. He himself looked and talked like what we call 'a good hater.' One imagines that he must certainly have hated Stead – he had good reason to do so; and yet I am convinced that Stead did not hate him. I am convinced (and those who were best acquainted with him agree with me) that Stead did not really hate anyone, although he could be so violent, so ruthless, in his attacks on individuals of whom he disapproved. His attitude towards Chamberlain, bitter though it generally was, had often in it an element of humour akin to that of Sir F. C. Gould. Everybody is familiar with Gould's inimitable series of Chamberlain cartoons and caricatures – Chamberlain's countenance, while not lacking good points, could look very repulsive and 'F. C. G.' exploited its uglinesses unpityingly. So it was, also, with Stead's onslaughts on Chamberlain's character as a politician. There was not much more of real downright, personal hatred in them than in the stinging satires which we owed to 'F. C. G.'s' priceless pencil.

The first of the many pamphlets devoted by Stead to Chamberlain during the years 1896–1903 was frankly a lampoon – namely the *Review of Reviews* Annual for 1896, entitled *Blastus*, written in the Autumn of 1895. It scarcely bears re-reading now, although in political circles it afforded a good deal of amusement at the time. Its sequel, however, the Annual for 1897, entitled *The History of the Mystery*, contains much that is still of interest. Moreover, to adopt the words which we shall find Edmund Garrett using, it is 'gorgeously and gloriously Steadean.'

Garrett, it must here be explained, had gone to South Africa in the spring of 1895 as editor of the *Cape Times*, splendidly heralded, of course, by Stead. 'If Mr. Garrett had a physique corresponding in vigour to his mental equipment,' Stead wrote then in the *Review of Reviews*, 'there is no doubt in my mind that in a few years he would have been the first journalist in London.' In the warm climate of South Africa it was to be hoped that his physical weakness, lung trouble, would not handicap him, and Stead prophesied boldly that his friend's character and genius would leave a more permanent impress upon the country's history than those of any other man except Cecil Rhodes. 'Of all my friends,' Garrett declared in a letter thanking Stead for these generous words, 'there is none, I think, who could write in such spirit of me before the world, and, absurd as it is, mean so much of it!'

The pupil, once arrived at his destination, went to work in a way worthy of the master. On the steamer going out had sailed a disciple of W. E. Henley, Stuart, of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, bound on a similar mission – the editing of a Cape daily, but on the other side in politics. They arrived in time to take part in a fierce electoral battle. 'It will be Stead *versus* Henley at the Cape!' Garrett wrote some days later: 'For Stuart puts H's name on his flag, I yours. My opening blow-off[1] set all the hounds of S.A. journalism yap-yapping, and your name and mine were blent in a hundred cuttings in volleys of abuse!' And a week or two later, he writes with a glee which Stead will have shared to the full: 'They say I am all egotism and side! Quite a "W. T. S." on a small scale in fact! ! !'

[1] The 'blow-off' had been a characteristically bold declaration of independence. Rhodes was the chief proprietor of the *Cape Times* and it was generally supposed that Garrett would be merely Rhodes's mouthpiece. This wrong impression Garrett completely removed.

In August 1896, Stead wrote to tell Garrett of the new Chamberlain Annual which he was beginning to think out – a kind of imaginative reconstruction of the whole episode of the abortive revolution in Johannesburg which had culminated in Jameson's Raid: a mixture of fact and fiction, with a journalist of genius as chief actor in the whole story. Stead's letter drew a rapturous reply – seventeen pages of close handwriting, dashed off evidently at a breathless rate. 'I roared with laughter,' Garrett begins, 'when I read your letter received yesterday, about Christmas Number. It was so gorgeously and gloriously Steadean!' At first, it had come as a bit of a shock, however, for he (Garrett) also had a Raid Christmas Number in preparation, but on reflection he had seen that the two ventures need not clash. He will, he says, help Stead with the Cape part of the fiction and Stead can help him with the mere facts, as known in London. 'You will see,' he declares enthusiastically, 'that all will be well and *two* tremendous successes will be the result!' He continues:

'Read – mark – learn!

'(1) A suggestion which will help to keep us distinct, give you a much grander theme, and do something for C. J. R. which no one has yet dared – I went nearer in "Cecil Rhodes's dream" but that was a hint only:[1] *viz*. Make World see what he was driving at and what would have come *if all had come off* and if J'bg (Johannesburg) had played up.

'If you won't do this, I shall introduce it at the end of mine *as a Dream*, from which C. J. R. wakes up to stern reality of Rinderpest Rebellion and Jameson in Gaol. . . . Now *you* can do this better than anybody, and it is really the thing that most wants doing. Eno' of argument: either the idea fructifies for you or it don't. *Verb: sap:*

'(2) As to making *me* the hero. No. But I daresay the idea's good (and Steadean) to make an editor the chorus and peg and to some extent, therefore, the hero. But he must be not only me but you also, and A. Milner and a few more rolled into one; and he must do what I dreamed of doing – but time and space prevented, *viz*. hear of Raid as soon as C. J. R. does, and, without a word (after dictating leader to rouse and keep straight Cape Colony) rush up to J'bg, arriving just after Doornkop (Sunday – Wednesday), displace the

[1] An allusion to an article in which he had set forth some of Rhodes's aspirations.

palsied or disunited Reform Committee, harangue Uitlanders, lead an attack on Pretoria, rescue Jameson, arm J'bg from the arsenal at Pretoria, stop High Commissioner at border respectfully but firmly (in the spirit of my wire to the J'bg *Star* – "Imperial Govt. can't do the thing *for* you, but you must for 'selves").

'Send for C. J. R. who has meanwhile *refused to resign* and stemmed the storm here and resumed marvellous sway over Africanders, Hofmeyr accepting inevitable, after a futile momentary struggle. C. J. R. enters Pretoria and finds your hero ("Milner Garsted" or "Milsted"?) holding in check the swollen, flag-wagging Jingoes (the very men who, when he first turned up, were creeping under beds and saying "all's lost!") who want to hoist the Union Jack. C. J. R. says "No – we've won by a fluke, a coup, a surprise. This old Puritan minority of Boers will fight and in the end win or split S. Africa, unless we consult their convictions and cherished faiths. Go for a South African Union, keeping this Republic (and under its own flag) but sending delegates to a Convention forthwith: the nucleus of a future Federal Council of which High Commissioner, as President, accepted by Boer Republic: and so practically unite S. Africa under Great Britain without perfidy to Dutch."

'Then C. J. R. must have a struggle between wishing to fix whole thing up at once and save further complications and on the other hand, his past career and glimmering of ethical considerations making him do the fair thing by the Dutch. He enters into the whole plan, carries all S.A. with him, goes to Convention, and fixes up Union on proper Rhodesian lines, coercing Joe by cable – Joe might run off the false scent of the Union Jack and insist that either we climb down or declare the Republic a Colony: C. J. R. playing off the Fleet (which Joe orders to blockade S. Africa) against the Dutch malcontents, and the Dutch malcontents *plus* the English Home Rule Colonists against Joe, and fixing all up!

'As It Should Have Been!'

If done upon these lines – so the long epistle concluded – Stead's Christmas Number would be –

THE CRISIS AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN,

while Garrett's own would be –

THE CRISIS AS IT WAS.

*The History of the Mystery*, as eventually written and published, embodied a good deal of this vivid sketch, but with characteristic modifications. The Editor-Hero, instead of being a glorified Garrett, as Stead had at first intended, or the mixture of himself and Garrett and Milner here suggested, is a woman! A wonderful woman, made up of all Stead most admired in womanhood – a blend of Joan of Arc and Olive Schreiner and Mrs. Besant, with reminiscences of half a dozen other living women whom he knew. Jeanne Leflo, he designated her. Olive Schreiner comes into the story incidentally in her own person and under her name. Rhodes, as large as life, is the Hon. Robert J. Cecil; Chamberlain is 'Blastus' – or 'Joe,' for short; Lord Harris, Rhodes's intermediary with the Colonial office, is Mr. Cactus; Dr. Jameson is called Zahlber – though it is not suggested that he is of German extraction.[1] It is a story with a purpose, as Garrett saw it must be – or rather with two purposes: first, that of expounding and explaining Rhodes; secondly, that of shielding Chamberlain in the interest alike of Rhodes and of the Empire. Chamberlain was already denying all complicity in the revolutionary project which had miscarried in Jameson's Raid. To Stead, this denial seemed at once a mistake in tactics and an untruth: an untruth because he was convinced that (as was being declared throughout South Africa) 'Joe was in it up to the neck': a tactical mistake, because all that had to be confessed was that Chamberlain had been willing to sanction armed intervention in the Transvaal in a certain specified contingency wherein such intervention could not fairly be condemned.[2] By revealing, in advance of the House of Commons inquiry, the precise nature of Chamberlain's complicity and its comparative innocence, Stead claimed to be providing a 'featherbed' for the Colonial Minister to fall on. The 'Mystery' to be solved had been as to the kind of skeleton 'Blastus' had had in his cupboard: Stead's 'History' of it demonstrated that it was 'Not Such a Bad Skeleton After All!'.

[1] Stead was never very felicitous in the naming of his *dramatis personæ*. The ugly 'Blastus' he took from the Acts of the Apostles. King Herod had a chamberlain named Blastus, so Stead remembered while he was at work on his Annual for 1896. 'Joe,' he contended, might be regarded as King Demos's chamberlain. And so on.

[2] A possible contingency which had been frankly recognized in 1894 by Sir Henry Loch, then High Commissioner at Cape Town: *viz.* of a revolution breaking out at Johannesburg and of the necessity for the sending of British troops into the country with a view to helping to restore order.

Early proofs of the story went to Stead's Cape Town accomplice in November. Garrett read it with mingled feelings of disturbance and delight. It was the best Christmas Number, he declared, that Stead had ever written and Jeanne was 'gorgeous.' It must certainly be 'boomed,' but how was Garrett to do this while minimizing Joe's 'complicity,' of which Stead had made so much? That was a problem! Not that Stead had exaggerated the truth – on the whole, Garrett thought he had 'let Blastus down lightly and might have been much worse,' but, from the standpoint of South African unity, the less said about any kind of Imperial guilt the better. This letter of Garrett's is tantalizingly elliptical. A few more words and it might have been a most illuminating document. 'It'll all have to come out now, but I know all and am not afraid' – so we read in one place. This does not seem quite to tally with what follows: 'Two trump cards yet remain in the English-Boer game –

'1. If Leyds can catch Joe over Raid plot.

'2. If Joe can catch Leyds over German plot.

'Please God we'll pull Joe through on No. 1, but why you, of all men, should try to give it away I don't know. You've done *wonders* in easing it off but better have left (it?)' – the concluding word of the letter is omitted.[1]

So much for Stead's story of the Crisis as it might have been. The reader who is at all interested in the subject should not fail to compare these extracts from Garrett's letters with what he himself had to say in public, first in that Christmas Number of his own, and later, more completely, in volume form.[2] It is a most fascinating narrative, written with verve and feeling and courage. There are ten pages in the Introduction to it in which, while treating his former chief with affectionate respect, Garrett seeks to refute and dismiss his chief contentions and imputations. It is a most careful and well-balanced little treatise, this Introduction. It is balanced so carefully, indeed, that as Garrett himself was conscious, an impatient partisan of the

[1] Some portions of Stead's Annual were 'blotted out' before publication out of regard for the feelings of one of his informants who feared that too much had been revealed. This added an element of 'sensation' to the publication. As a matter of fact, there was nothing of importance in the passages thus erased. Garrett, who read them in the early 'proofs,' declared that he could recall nothing in them 'that was as bad as the blots.'

[2] *The Story of an African Crisis:* Being the truth about the Jameson Raid and Johannesburg revolt of 1896, told with the assistance of the leading actors in the drama. Constable & Co., 1897.

Colonial Secretary might well interrupt it with the angry question, 'why not say at once that Mr. Chamberlain knew nothing and that it's all a disgraceful lie and that people who "thought" had no business to "think," and so on, or else leave it alone?' And to any such interruption Garrett could, he says, only answer that neither a bold, bald Aye or Nay was possible: 'It is so with most questions where more than two or three human beings are concerned. It took Browning – how many thousand lines to "whitewash" Pompilia?'

The volume was published early in 1897. To 'leave Joe as many loopholes as possible' may be taken to have been its chief purpose, for Garrett, writing to Stead on the subject three months later, urges that 'it was best' to take this line – 'though, by the way,' he adds, 'I believe I am regarded by him (Joe), and his, as a villain only second to yourself after the Introduction I added to my Crisis book in England. Our ointments, *yours* and mine, are apt to break our friends' heads, I find, and our "feather-beds" their bones!' And he proceeds: 'The effect of any really bad implication of Joe just now would be simply ruinous here. True, nothing can now eradicate suspicion, but suspicion is not a form lending itself to diplomatic use.'

'Not Proven' would seem, at this stage, to be Garrett's verdict upon the case against Chamberlain as argued by Stead. 'Not Proven,' with the rider – 'And for Heaven's sake stop trying to prove it!'

But the proceedings of the South African Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the whole matter, were to harden Stead against listening to any such appeal!

## III

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMITTEE

Nobody had much good to say of that South African Committee and its methods. 'In the public interest,' Milner wrote to Stead on November 16, 1896, 'an earthquake which should engulf the Committee at its first sitting would clearly be the best thing. But I fear Heaven no longer intervenes in the affairs of men in this early-Semitic fashion.' Some nine months later, having meanwhile been appointed Governor-General of Cape Colony, he had occasion to refer again to the subject, this time in defence of Chamberlain against Stead's unceasing attacks: 'I trust,' he said, 'now that the Committee is over, the crusade against "Joe" may cease. He has his

faults, no doubt, and at the Judgment Day "the Lord who seeth in secret" (or is it "Your Father?" I am not good at Biblical quotations) may have a word to say to him. But he is a good man to serve under, clearheaded and not afraid to support his men. On the whole, I think he is by far the best Col. Sec. we have ever had, and I hope we may keep him.'

Stead was further than ever from taking that view of Chamberlain, and his attacks continued. I shall not follow them here. The whole story is still of great interest to those who followed the inquiry at the time, with anxiety or amusement or disgust, but it would not mean much, probably, to the world at large to-day. Stead re-told it in one of his most famous pamphlets, *The Scandal of the South African Committee: A Plain Narrative for Plain Men*, issued in the winter of 1899, shortly after the beginning of the war. Here are three paragraphs from the Preface in which he gave his reasons for doing so:

'The time has come when it is necessary to set forth in plain words, which the plain man can understand, a narrative of Mr. Chamberlain's complicity in the conspiracy to overthrow the Government of the South African Republic in 1895.

'Let me, at the beginning, emphasize the importance of distinguishing between the conspiracy to bring about a revolution in the Transvaal with a British Force on the Border in support, which was the Jameson Plan, and the Jameson Raid. The two things are almost always confounded by the indiscriminating public. So far from being identical, the Jameson Raid cut the throat of the conspiracy. Dr. Jameson acted, no doubt, with the best intentions in the world, but, as a matter of fact, he not only upset Mr. Rhodes's applecart, but from excessive zeal caused the miscarriage of an enterprise which, however indefensible it may have been from the point of view of constitutional law, would, if it had succeeded, have delivered us from all our present troubles. If, therefore any person should say that Mr. Chamberlain was privy to the Raid, or that Mr. Chamberlain had anything whatever to do with the Raid, either that he knew about it beforehand, or that he sanctioned it, or that he was in any way whatever responsible for it, such person would say that which is not true. The Raid was Dr. Jameson's own act, and it spoiled everything. The Jameson Plan was that to which Mr. Chamberlain was privy.

'I have never made any charge, or accusation, or complaint against

Mr. Chamberlain for the support which he gave to the conspiracy against the Government of Paul Kruger. Neither do I at this moment lay any stress upon that side of the question. Others, no doubt, take a very serious view of the matter. They may be right, and I may be wrong. All that I wish to point out is that, so far from being animated, as many ignorantly declare, by a persistent and vindictive animosity against Mr. Chamberlain, I have from first to last endeavoured to make every conceivable excuse for his action in the autumn of 1895. If since I have been driven to criticize his action, it has been due, not to anything that he did in 1895, but to the manner in which he persisted, in the face of all warnings and protests, in adopting a policy of concealing the truth, denying facts and making both parties in the House of Commons unwilling accomplices in a conspiracy to deceive the nation, which is, I believe without parallel in the history of Parliamentary Government. It is this offence which is rank, an offence committed in the full light of day, after careful and long deliberation, and with the distinct purpose and object of concealing the truth and giving official Parliamentary currency to a lie.'

## CHAPTER 22

# STEAD AND THE PRINCE OF WALES IN 1896

## HOW LADY WARWICK BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER AT LUNCHEON IN DECEMBER OF THAT YEAR

THROUGHOUT the nineties Stead was immensely interested not only in the personality and in the behaviour of the Prince of Wales, but even more in the possibilities of the great position to which the Prince was heir and to which at any moment now – for Queen Victoria was growing very old – he might succeed. Some day, some diarist from behind the scenes of our Royal Court will perhaps enlighten us completely as to the future King's life at this period, his relations with his martinet mother, the nature and effects of his much-discussed friendships, the feelings entertained regarding him by the Queen's Ministers and other advisers. How Stead would have loved to hear it all! There were not many subjects that engrossed him more than this. Among his unpublished writings there is almost none more characteristic of him than a long memorandum which he dictated in December 1896, to a confidential secretary and in which he recorded, for use obviously at some distant date, whether by himself or by some one else, the things that seemed to him most significant and important – and amusing! – about the Prince. The time has not yet come for publishing this document in full. There can, however, be no conceivable harm in reproducing a portion: Stead's account of a *tête-à-tête* conversation which he had with the Prince of Wales at the house of Lady Warwick, then at the height of her popularity and renown as one of the 'reigning beauties' of London society. From the preliminary matter which leads up to this, it will suffice to transcribe a few passages:[1]

'It may perhaps be well before describing my interview with the Prince of Wales, to explain somewhat of the circumstances under

[1] It should perhaps be emphasized that this narrative is taken from notes hastily dictated and that it was not meant for publication just as it stands. But to me and several friends of Stead's, journalists and writers of note, to whom I have shown these pages, it has seemed beyond question permissible to reproduce, with a few excisions, his exact words. So it has seemed also to Lady Warwick.

which we met. When Morley was editing the *Pall Mall Gazette* he met the Prince at Sir Frederick Leighton's, and he told us next morning that the Prince had been cordial and had said that he always stuck to the *Pall Mall* – that he took it regularly, but, said he, "You are too strenuous, too uniformly strenuous." This criticism, which was perfectly just, led to a custom in the office, whenever the "Occasional Notes" wanted to be lightened up, for one of us to say, "We must have some Notes for the Prince of Wales!" Morley heard us once and was very indignant; he was quite offended at the liberty which we took with H.R.H.'s name and forbade us ever to use such a phrase again!

'I did not come across the Prince, even indirectly, until when the "Maiden Tribute" was on. The Maiden Tribute brought me into contact with Sir George Lewis, and through Sir George I often heard of the Prince, who, rumour said, used to see him every Sunday morning. That, I think, is an exaggeration. George Lewis, however, has certainly done a good deal of work for the Prince one way and another. Lewis told me that he had often talked about me with the Prince who seemed to think I had held him up to public obloquy as guilty of no end of crimes, etc.

'In the year of the Jubilee I saw the Prince come down Westminster Abbey beside the late Emperor Frederick, and the contrast between the short, somewhat dumpy figure of H.R.H. and the stately figure of the Emperor led me to put my foot in it next morning. I was writing a leader in the *Pall Mall* on the Jubilee, and I said that the Monarchy was no doubt safe in our time and as long as the Queen reigned, but afterwards "when the fat little man in red who cut so poor a figure beside his magnificent brother-in-law in white" came to the throne, how long would it last? I wrote it, feeling I would like to see how it looked in print, and then cut it out, but when I showed it to E. T. Cook, he protested against its going out, urging that it was the best bit in the leader and must remain. Of course I liked it, for it gave colour and point to the whole thing, but I felt it ought not to have gone in; however, in it went, whereupon there was a fearful row. Two friends of the Prince, officers I think, went round to all the clubs in Pall Mall with this passage marked, and represented to the Club Committees that out of loyalty to the Prince they must discontinue taking in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Some of the clubs dropped it when the "Maiden Tribute" was published; all of them with

one exception, I think, dropped it after "The fat little man" appeared.[1]

'When I was in gaol E. T. Cook, then engaged in compiling his *Pall Mall* Extra, "The Hundred Best Books," wrote to the Prince among others, and the Prince replied regretting the omission of Dryden from the list. That, I think, was the only contribution we ever had from him in the *Pall Mall*. I always wrote to him when I wanted to know anything, just the same as if nothing had happened, and when the *Review of Reviews* was started I wrote to him as well as to others about the project. He sent a very kind letter, which was published among the other autographs.

'It was after the famous baccarat scandal at Tranby Croft that I came into close quarters with the Prince. I was staying down at Mr. Haddon's place in the country and was much struck at noticing the indignation of the good Baptists in whose house I was about the Prince's gambling. I had intended to say nothing about it, feeling that the Prince had really done his duty, and that as for the gambling, that was what everybody did in his set and it was absurd making such a fuss about it, but when I came back to town and found a general expectation that I must say something, I determined to do a character-sketch. This character-sketch brought me into close quarters with a good many people. Among others I had two hours' talk with Sir Francis Knollys. I had many conversations with Lady Henry Somerset, and after it was in type, a very extraordinary correspondence with Mr. Gladstone.

'Mr. Gladstone wrote me at great length, almost in the terms of one who believed I was setting a match to a mine that would blow the Constitution heavens-high. He insisted that it was my duty to lay the proofs before Lord Salisbury. I saw Morley, who went to Mr. Gladstone's at the time when he was staying in the country. He found the old man in a great pother about it. My line was to defend the Prince for his action at Tranby Croft, but generally to express

[1] This phrase had brought him the following sharp but amusingly expressed rebuke from Colonel Brocklehurst (later Lord Ranksborough): 'If the Prince of Wales, wishing to speak ill of the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, prefaced his remarks by saying "That gaunt wild-looking individual, always badly dressed," would it not appear to you pointless bad taste, taking away to a great extent the value of any further remarks he had to make on the subject?' In a friendly note written a week later, Colonel Brocklehurst added: 'You are not a small man, so don't do small things.'

regret at the kind of life he had led and to indicate how much better use he might have made of it. After I had written the first draft I sent it to Sir Francis Knollys, who returned it to me saying it was so utterly and entirely unjust, it was no use his trying to put anything right and he would not touch it. Whereupon I modified it. Brett's judgment as to the modifications was that I had made the article much more damaging than it was originally! But Mr. Gladstone was very pleased with the changes and said complacently to Mr. Morley when he was talking it over: "I think there we did some good."

'During the talks that I had when writing the sketch, both Sir Francis Knollys and Lady Henry Somerset, who might be regarded as the two poles on the subject, agreed that since the Prince had taken up with Lady Warwick, he had led a much better life – that she had cleared out "the American gang" and that her influence had been distinctly and visibly for the better, and had terminated all the late hours and generally fast living that had prevailed before.

'It was shortly after the Duke of Clarence's death, that I met Lady Warwick for the first time at a dinner party at Moreton Frewen's. After dinner we talked for more than an hour. She talked very simply and frankly about the Prince. She said that when the *Review of Reviews* character-sketch came out in 1891 he brought his copy to her in its wrapper, saying, "I am told that there is an awful article in here about me, I dare not open it. I want you to do so, read it, and tell me what it says." She did so, read it, and told him she thought it a very good article, very just, and that it gave him very good advice and was very fair. I don't remember much else that passed between us on this occasion excepting that I talked as usual about many things, and I should have forgotten everything I said, if it had not been for one remark which apparently impressed her and bore fruit. I was protesting against the notion that I assumed a Pharisaic virtue or professed to be better than anyone else. "As a matter of fact," I said, "I never talk to anybody intimately – so as to know and understand their position – without feeling that if I had been in their place, I should probably have been much worse than they were." It was years afterwards before she told me about this, and that she then felt ever after that, if she ever needed a friend who could understand, I was that person.'

Stead proceeds at this point, first to describe the growth of his own

close and very cordial relationship to the Countess of Warwick, which was to be life-long, and then to record in detail a long conversation which they had early in 1896 regarding her famous friendship with the Prince of Wales. What follows needs, really, no further words of preface. I shall but remark, borrowing from Lamb, that here we have the great 'W. T. S.' in his quiddity:

'Lady Warwick told the Prince about this talk, and he was naturally interested and said he would like to see me. Various things helped to postpone our meeting. Finally the Prince proposed I should meet him at lunch at Lady Warwick's on a Sunday in November 1896. I refused, said I never went up to Town to lunch on Sundays, and that I would not make a beginning with the Prince. Lady Warwick said the only thing then was to arrange for a Saturday. The Prince assented to this arrangement and it was fixed. Then Lady Warwick was riding her horse downhill, hunting, when the horse put its foot into a hole and fell, threw her and walked over her, with concussion of the brain as the result. This prevented the lunch, so another appointment was made which at last came off at 77 South Audley Street, Lady Algy Lennox's house, which Lady Warwick had taken for the winter. On Tuesday, December 8, she asked me to come at 1.15 to see her before and to have lunch at two. I found her very unwell, she had just got out of bed. The journey up to Town had made her head bad – some congestion in the brain the doctor said – and she had to go to bed directly he left. I asked Lady Warwick to tell me what to talk about. She said "Anything." I asked whether we could talk about South African affairs or my proposed character sketch of the Queen, and she said anything I liked. That she had told the Prince I would do him so much good that he was very anxious to see me. I said I was afraid that if she talked to him like that he would think that I was like brimstone and treacle and would regard me with a kind of holy horror. She said no, he had been looking forward to this talk a great deal and I could talk to him about Russia, he was very much interested in Russia and generally about everything.

'I asked if I could talk about her.

'She seemed rather amused, and I said I thought the only importance of this interview would arise from the extent to which I had been able to "hook and eye" the Prince. That is to say, if he took to me as some people did, and felt that I might be useful as a friend,

then anything might come of it, and in future we should share her "Parishioner"[1] between us, and therefore I thought it might be rather "worldly-wise" of me, but as the important thing was to interest the Prince, the best thing for me to do was to talk about that in which he was most interested, and as that subject was herself, I would with her permission, if the opportunity offered, sing her praises as soon as she left the room.

'She laughed very much at this and said she had no doubt it would please him as much as anything I could do. "Then," I said, "I shall do it if opportunity offers," but as no opportunity offered, I did not mention her name, which I think was perhaps as well.

'She said she was rather out with Lord Rosebery. First because he had snubbed the Prince about Burdett's Old Age Pensions articles, which were appearing in *The Times*. She was very enthusiastic about these articles, she said. The scheme was a far better one than Mr. Chamberlain's, and the Prince, who had taken a sincere interest in Old Age Pensions ever since he had sat on the Royal Commission, had gone to talk about it to Rosebery when he was at Sandringham, but Rosebery refused absolutely to take any interest in it, said there was nothing in Old Age Pensions, that it bored him to death, and, in short, generally vexed the Prince, who wrote that it was deplorable that Rosebery would not take any trouble to keep in touch with things or to keep his friends together – that no party could be kept together if its leader treated people in this fashion, etc.

'Lady Warwick said that before Christmas she would come up from Warwick and I must dine with her alone when we could have a quiet three hours together as less than that was no good.

'The Prince was going down to Sir Edward Lawson's to a shooting party that evening, and was expected to go by the 4.30 train. He was about ten minutes late and came in about 2.10. Lady Warwick advanced to meet him and made an extremely pretty curtsey, prettier than any I had seen before, then he came forward and shook hands. Then I made a small bow which I felt contrasted badly from the point of view of grace with Lady Warwick's! I may say that as it was the first time I was ever with a Prince, I did not know but I might put my foot in it. The Prince shook hands in coming and in going

[1] It was a contention of Stead's, playfully expressed, that Lady Warwick was in duty bound to continue exercising a good influence over the Prince as over 'a parishioner' entrusted to her care.

out. He does not shake hands nicely, only about half his hand he puts in and there is no grip in it. I don't remember whether when I went away I turned my back on him or not.

'When we went to lunch, Lady Warwick went first, he next, and I came last. At lunch he sat at the head of the table, Lady Warwick and I sat opposite each other. I rang the bell once for the servant, who left us alone after bringing in each course. I never said "Royal Highness" as far as I remember, neither do I remember saying "Sir." When he finished I opened the door for him and walked behind him up the stairs just a few steps, talking, which Brett says was right. I was perfectly at my ease all through.

'After he had said a few words to her as to her health he turned to me and asked me if I had seen Burdett's paper on Old Age Pensions. Fortunately I had heard quite sufficient from Lady Warwick about it to join in the conversation without answering his question. He began to discuss Mr. Burdett. He said Mr. Burdett was a very clever man who was worked to death at the Stock Exchange where he had £5,000 a year, but he had several children. But for them he would retire. Both the Prince and Lady Warwick sang Burdett's praises a bit. I recalled the fact of his offer to go to China which the Prince said first of all he forgot, but afterwards remembered. Burdett led on to nursing, and then we talked about the article by a nurse in the *National Review* abusing the new nurses, which Lady Warwick had read, but not the Prince. Then luncheon was served and we went downstairs.

'The Prince ate very rapidly, taking, I think, every course excepting lobster, in which respect we all followed suit. I don't remember what wine he drank. He struck me when he came into the room as being slightly under the middle height, not so stout as I had expected, very simple in his manners, and had at first a look – I don't know whether it was his moustache or in his eyes – which made you have a half-impression that he had either a slight squint, or that one of his front teeth was awry. It was only at the beginning, for the impression went off rapidly.

'The conversation turned almost immediately upon Rhodes. The Prince spoke most enthusiastically of Rhodes. "Fine fellow!" he said, "Wonderful man. He will never tell a lie. I am quite sure he won't. Don't you agree with me?"

'I said he would not the last time when there was great pressure

brought to bear upon him, and there would be the same pressure this time.

'"He won't do it," said the Prince. "I am quite sure he won't. He is a truthful man, that."

'The Prince listened very attentively as I sang Rhodes's praises, every now and then chiming in. I told him it was Mr. Rhodes's idea of his duty to his Creator to paint as much of the map of the world British-red as possible.

'"Well," said the Prince, "He is a very remarkable man. I hardly know any man who has impressed me more than he did."

'"Yes," I said, "and to think that he ought to be arrested the moment he puts his foot on British shores!"

'"I suppose that is so?" he said.

'"Yes," said I, "Under the Lord Chief Justice's summing up."

'"I wonder," said the Prince, "why he was so hard on them and strained things so. I am going to see him to-night and I will ask him why he did it. I wonder why he did it. I suppose," he said, "Rhodes is going to have a wonderful reception at Cape Town."

'Yes. I supposed he would, as even the Dutch farmers thought they would not have any rinderpest if Rhodes had only remained in power. Then I got talking about the officers.

'The Prince said he was very glad Jameson was out. It was a great pity, and he certainly thought if they let the dynamitards out, they should not keep him in.

'I said, yes, but the dynamitards were poor wretches who had a very hard time and were really going mad.

'He said they had recovered their senses sufficiently to make speeches, some of them, since they had got out.

'I said two of them were mad now, and it was enough to make them so.

'He said it was very awful, the confinement.

'I said it was very hard lines on the officers to lose their commissions.

'He said, yes, it was very hard for them to be in jail at all, it was a great pity, he thought they had not made a very good job of it from a military point of view, that Willoughby was not exactly the man of whom a Moltke or a Wellington was made.

'On which I remarked that such men were rare.

'He laughed and said Yes, he was afraid so. "But," he continued,

"it was a very bad business, a very great blunder," and he was afraid it would have been a worse business if Jameson had got into Johannesburg, for if he had, the Orange Free State would have joined in and the Cape Dutch, and there would have been a war with Germany and a frightful mess.

'I said I did not think so, and told him the story about Kruger having resigned on the Monday morning, and I said that I thought they would have been only too glad to have welcomed the High Commissioner to arrange terms of settlement.

' "Well," he said, "it might be so."

'He had evidently been well coached by Lord Rosmead as to the consequences of Jameson's getting into Johannesburg.

'Then we talked about Lord Rosmead. He asked did I think he was in it.

'I said I thought in justice to Lord Rosmead it ought to be recognized that he had been talked to in paraphrases by Jameson, and that though Beit was said to have spoken to him more directly, I believed it was more or less put in a hypothetical way, "supposing such and such things happened, what would you do?" That Jameson certainly sent his last telegram to Rhodes in order to make sure that Rhodes would tell the High Commissioner and Hofmeyr, which Rhodes had not done, and did not do until after the letters arrived. Therefore I thought Lord Rosmead was not so much to blame as people thought.

'Then he asked about Chamberlain. As the Prince had seen all the cables, I did not go into any details, but said I supposed he was in it too, but that he would get out of it if he would only speak the truth.

'The Prince asked if I did not think Chamberlain was a very clever man?

'I said, "Yes, he is a very clever man."

'He said, "I remember him when I went down to Birmingham, he was then Mayor and a terrific Socialist then, quite the kind of man whom, if you mentioned his name at a dinner table, it was like as if you talked of Tom Mann or someone like that." "Yes," continued the Prince, "but he was very nice and we got on very well, they think no end of him at Birmingham."

' "Yes," said Lady Warwick, " I sat next the Mayor of Birmingham the other day, and although he was a Radical, he would not have a word against Chamberlain. He was quite furious with the *Daily*

*Chronicle* for suggesting that Chamberlain might possibly have known something about it.

'"He has married three times," said the Prince. "This is his third wife."

'Then I talked a little of Chamberlain from the point of view of the people in Africa, who certainly believed he knew and approved, although he may not have understood the full extent to which he was committing himself. Then we got back to Rhodes again, and I said he was the only millionaire I knew who regarded all his money as held in trust for the Empire.

'"Fine thing, fine thing, that. Does he really?"

'The Prince continued to talk pleasantly. Society small talk for the most part. Which reminded me of the type of Society hostess who contrives to give the impression to every one that she is much interested in what he is saying, and five minutes afterwards forgets all about it. Another thing which struck me about him was that he seemed to have a kind of eager pleasure in finding points upon which he could come down upon persons who had not been doing quite the right thing in his opinion.

'For instance, he began talking about Mr. Bayard, the American, and the *Daily Telegraph's* proposed subscription. He said "Fine fellow, Bayard, but it was a most unfortunate thing, quite ridiculous thing of the *Daily Telegraph* to propose to raise a subscription to him, an ambassador." He said, "I am going to see Sir Edward Lawson, I am going to his place, and I shall tell him so. It won't do. I cannot understand what made them make such a mistake."

'Then we got to talking about Russia. I asked him when he was going back to Russia. He said he would like to go, there was no country in the world in which he had so many friends. I said I thought he should make it his business to go there once every year as a kind of plenipotentiary extraordinary. That he was very popular there and his visits did a world of good.

'He said nothing would please him better than to go. He enjoyed going to Russia very much. Then, I think, it was Lady Warwick brought in somehow or other, Madame Novikoff.

'Then the Prince turned round to me and said, "Ah, I don't like your Madame Novikoff."

'"Really!" I said. "Why?"

'"You know," he said, in a kind of impulsive, schoolboy fashion,

"I think she is a great humbug." Then he burst out laughing. "She gives herself such airs as if she had a great position and great power, and I know she has none of these things."

'I was rather nettled and said: "I beg your pardon. I think you are quite wrong. I have known Madame Novikoff for twenty years, and she is not a bit of a humbug. She has always been most simple and I have never known her to pretend to anything she cannot do."

' "Well," he said, "that is what they say. I read a book of hers lately, *Russia in England*. She talks very largely about our duties. She forgets that a country like England has a continuous policy which cannot be turned round at a moment's notice."

' "Well," I said, "She has done her part in these twenty years in turning it round. For these twenty years she has been the only person who has attempted to make English people understand Russian policy."

' "In that she may have done good," he said.

' "Yes." I said, "And when you have worked with anyone for twenty years, and during all that time she has never deceived you once in anything she has told you, it is something to say for anyone."

' "It is indeed. That is true."

' "I knew I would draw Mr. Stead," said Lady Warwick triumphantly. "You see he is quite devoted to Madame Novikoff." [1]

'Then from Madame Novikoff, we got on to talking about M. de Staal. He said Staal was one of the best men that ever lived. He was very fond of him, a perfectly truthful fellow who never said anything that was not true.

'I said he very seldom could tell you anything.

' "Yes," he said, "I wonder why it is they don't tell him more."

' "They do not tell him because it is only when the time comes to give an ambassador orders that they tell him. When things are in the making they do not."

'About this time, Lady Warwick said she would go up to the drawing-room and leave us to our coffee and to smoke. "You have

[1] 'In conversation with Madame Novikoff afterwards,' Stead added in a parenthesis, 'for I went to see her immediately after leaving South Audley Street, I gathered that the source of the Prince's antipathy is probably the Duchess of Coburg. Of course, Madame Novikoff has no position like a Grand Duchess, and yet, so far as the English public is concerned, Madame Novikoff has more influence in her little finger than the Duchess has in her whole body. And the Duchess may not like it.'

cigars?" she said to the Prince. "Oh, yes," he said, "I am all right."

'I then opened the door for her, and said in a side whisper, "Is it going on all right?"

' "Quite right," she said, pressing my hand.

'Then I came back and we sat down. He offered me a cigar which I took and we began to smoke.

' "I like the Russians," he said. "Their women are charming and most accomplished, the men are most interesting, but I don't like their system of Government. I think their persecution of the Jews is most deplorable and I don't altogether trust them. But the present Emperor always tells me that the idea of injuring us in India is not in his thoughts at all. He has been in India, was very glad to have seen the country, but as for attacking us there, he has not the thought in his head. He always says so. The late Emperor was a very peaceful man. I believe," he continued "his hatred of war was largely physical. You see he was a big man, very heavy, and he hated to have to spend the whole day in the saddle as he must do in case of war, and his intense reluctance to make war was partly based on that. Also he had a great horror of the war he had seen in Bulgaria, when the young Grand Duke was killed close by his side."

'Then I told the Prince about my interview with the late Tsar at Gatchina. He had never heard about it, he said, and seemed extremely interested. Asked questions as I went on, wished to know what language I spoke. I said English.

'He said it was curious, because the Tsar would never speak to him in English.

'I said he had the advantage of knowing several languages, whereas I only knew one, so that the Tsar talked to me in my own language. He wanted to know when the interview took place, and I told him, and then talked about Constantinople and the Dardanelles.

'The Prince was very much interested.

'Then I said that I went through France where I had seen General Boulanger.

' "Ah," he said, "a wind-bag that, nothing but a wind-bag."

'I said to him, and this was the only passage in the whole conversation which was at all "worldly wise," but it was absolutely genuine, "I do not think it is quite just to say he is only a wind-bag. Politically perhaps, but when I think about that man there is one point about him which touches me much."

'"Indeed!" said he, "what was that?"

'I said, "From one point of view it was a bad one, but from another it was very good. I was in Paris at the time he was elected deputy and everything was ready for a march upon the Elysée, and if he had been there he would probably have been installed as Dictator of France, but when the moment came, the man was not there, he was away in the north of France with his lady-love, and then, afterwards, you remember, he shot himself upon her grave. No, a man, who with all his faults is capable of a great passion for which he sacrifices his career and then his life is more than a wind-bag."

'"Yes, yes, perhaps so."

'He said very little about France, scarcely anything. Then I continued: "I went on to Berlin and tried to see Bismarck, but he would not see me, because – although I had introductions from Lord Rosebery – Bismarck said I was such a dangerous man."

'"Ah," he said, " That was because of the Colonial policy. But Bismarck, you know, was much against the Colonial policy, it was the best thing about him. He was always opposed to that, but afterwards when it got too strong for him it went on, but he has a great hatred of England. I think that it is deplorable that such misconceptions and evil feelings should be aroused. Just look at this strike. Here is Bismarck doing all he can to make the German people believe that because Tom Mann and these people go over to Hamburg, they are sent over by the English Government for the purpose of crippling German competition with British trade. The Government can do nothing, but I think the Press might do, and ought to do, as much as they can to prevent this wicked nonsense being believed. The German Emperor has somewhat quietened down and he is not hostile to this country. A great deal more was made of the telegram to the Transvaal than need have been. The two nations, although they would have opposing interests in many parts, are of the same religion, and it would be a world-wide catastrophe if they were to go to war. Ah," he continued, "how different everything would have been if the Emperor Frederick had lived. That man was a true friend, and with my sister," he said, "who is so clever, I think we could have done great things. If Germany and England would stand together there would be no danger of anything."

'"Yes," I said, "That was the last thing the Tsar said to me. If Germany, Russia and England stood together, the peace of the world

would be saved. We could snap our fingers at everybody else, but here is this Bismarck doing all he can to set the two nations by the ears. It is very deplorable."

'Then, talking of the German Emperor, I said he ought to have been a newspaper Editor. It would have suited him much better than having to be an Emperor, as he would not have to make a speech every day.

'The Prince said, "You should remember that many of his speeches sound much more absurd in English than they do in German. In German they do not read so absurdly as they do when they are translated."

'I told him I had been in Charlottenburg when the Emperor Frederick lay dying and the Empress Frederick had gone away to see about the sufferers from the floods, so I just missed her.

' "Ah, what a pity. It was the only forty-eight hours during the whole reign when she was away from the Emperor's side. It was a great pity you did not see her."

'Then we went on talking still about Russia, and the Prince said he had never seen Pobedonotzeff, who, he thought, was a powerful reactionary man of the period of Nicholas I.

'I said "Oh, dear me, no! Much farther back, the era of Peter the Great!" But I said he should see him, for he was very interesting and had read all the English books.

'He said he thought it was very deplorable, the persecution of the Jews and the Stundists. The Jews, no doubt, were a very bad lot in Russia, but the Russians were themselves to blame for letting them get the upper hand in the villages. The peasants had only just been emancipated from slavery, and the Jew was able, no doubt, to exploit them, but the Russians should have taken measures against that.

'I said it was a very difficult thing to prevent a Jew exploiting the peasantry. That the Jew was extremely clever and generally managed to come to the top.

' "Yes," he said, "it is so."

'Then we had some talk about the Queen.

'I had introduced the subject when Lady Warwick was there, by the way, by saying that an American Editor had commissioned me to write a sketch of the Queen as Sovereign. He said, "In America Republicans recognize that monarchy has its uses, and we have

reason to do this because on one famous occasion the Queen saved the two countries from going to war." That was, he said, at the time of the Trent affair.

'Now I remember how it was the matter came up. We were talking about the officers being in jail and the Prince said he thought it was very hard, it was a great pity nowadays there was no loyalty on the part of Governments to the people whom they employed. The first thought when anyone got into a scrape was to throw him over. "Ah," he said, "the minister I liked best, far best of them all, was Lord Palmerston. He was thoroughly loyal. He stood by whoever served him and never deserted them, he knew his own mind and put down his foot. He was a true British minister, an ideal minister."

'I said, "Well, on one occasion he put down his foot when Her Majesty made him take it up again."

' "I remember," he said.

Then it was that I introduced the subject of the Character Sketch.

' "My American Editor," I proceeded, "says there must have been many other times in which the Queen interfered for good."

' "Oh, many," he said.

' "And what he wants me to do is to find out all about the times in which the Queen has intervened in order that we may set forth to the American Republic the services which a monarch can render."

' "That," he said, "is very interesting. But there have been lots of times. But I have forgotten and it is very difficult to get anybody to tell you about them. Nearly all the old people who knew have died. The young ones who have come up, they know nothing, and they could tell you nothing."

'I said the Empress Frederick was the depository of all the traditions.

' "Ah, yes," he said, "she knew." [1]

'He said he really could not say who could tell me much about those things. He said the Queen was a wonderful woman. She had more knowledge of affairs, more experience in dealing with politics than any other living person with the exception, possibly, of Mr. Gladstone.

[1] 'Brett says she knows everything and has forgotten nothing,' Stead added in a parenthesis here. 'I did not press, however, for any formal introduction or recommendation to the Empress, feeling sure it would be better not to press too much at first and to rely upon Lady Warwick for anything in that direction that might be required afterwards.'

'Yes, I said, it was wonderful indeed. It was a wonderful reign. In fact, looking at it as I had to do from the point of view of writing this sketch, I felt there was nothing like it in English history *excepting that of Queen Elizabeth*, and I said I could not put it better than by saying I would rather have been his mother's son and heir-apparent than any king that ever sat on the English throne.

' "Would you?" he said.

' "Yes, certainly – look over them all! I would rather have been the eldest son of Elizabeth and heir-apparent to the English throne through the whole of the Elizabethan era, than I would have been Henry VII, Henry VIII, Charles I, James I or James II, or Charles II. Certainly I would."

'The idea seemed rather to strike him, but he only assented and said nothing more.

' "Then," I said, "I can hardly realize I am sitting on this chair, and you are sitting on that, and we are actually talking to each other as we are, after all that I have said about you in the past. I hope," I said, "if I have been a bit rough in anything I have written, you will – – "

' "Oh, dear me," he said, "I am a liberal-minded man. Don't mention it."

' "Well," I said, "I am glad to have had an opportunity of talking to you."

'He spoke pleasantly about its being a great pleasure to meet me and so on. Then without my saying a word, he suddenly landed on the Tranby Croft affair, and said there had been a good deal of fuss about the baccarat case, and he thought he had been rather hardly dealt with; that, after all, he was not given to gambling or playing for heavy stakes. What were the counters for, he said, excepting to prevent the game degenerating into heavy gambling, which is not nice in a country house. "I play a game of whist now and again, but really I very seldom touch cards, sometimes for a pastime I have no objection to a game, but the fuss they made about it was altogether unjust."

'Then we got on talking about his position. He said it was a very difficult one.

'I said I thought it was difficult, no doubt, but it was a very good position.

' "You think so?" he said.

'I think it is about the best position there is in the Empire, I don't mean for pomp."

' "I understand what you mean," he said.

' "Yes," I said, " I think it is the best position anyone could have with all its difficulties. Always," I said, "excepting my own. I would not exchange with you for anything."

'He laughed and said, "I suppose you like your independence."

' "I think I have the best position in the Empire," I said, "but I think that after me, you come. Oh yes, it is a much better position than that of the Prime Minister, for instance. There is Lord Salisbury who is in office now. For the next five years he will be kicking his heels, not able to do anything. But you never go out of office whether the Liberals or Tories are in."

' "But," he said, "I cannot take any part in politics."

' "In home politics, certainly not. But there was Mackenzie, the Scotch judge, who used to say, 'I cannot take part in politics because I am a judge, so that my only policy is to be against the Government of the day. For all Governments commit mistakes and make blunders, so all Governments are wrong, and I am against them all!' "

' "And it is not a bad line, either," said the Prince.

'By the way, when Lady Warwick was there, we had some talk about party politics, which Lady Warwick said were so deplorable in country villages, for the villagers of opposite politics would not work together for the common good. I said the Church and Chapel were worse than Whigs and Tories. To which she agreed. And when they were deploring these divisions I told them the story of the dissenting minister's method of reviving the cause by getting up a split.

'The Prince seemed rather amused, but I doubt whether he quite understood what "getting up a split" meant. But, I asked, did he not think there was much less bitter party feeling than there used to be?

'Lady Warwick said certainly there was, for she could remember when persons of opposite parties would never meet under the same roof.

'I said it was for the Prince to be at the head of a national party in which people would all be as zealous for England as they were now for their respective parties. "The opportunities for doing good and getting things done," I said to him, "lie all around you. It is not

by making speeches that you have most power, but by knowing the right men and being able to put them in motion at the right time."

'"Yes," he said, "he supposed it was."

'"Yes," I said, "and you must have known all the best people." He had known them all, from Wellington right down to the present day.

'"Ah," said I, "what reminiscences yours would be if you could only write them! George Lewis, whom you know very well, could write excellent reminiscences, but he says that it is quite impossible, he is the one man in London who must never write his reminiscences."

'I told him about Morley's quoting somebody who said that round the walls of the Royal Audience Chamber there were written these words: "Hear, but speak not," and I said they did keep a silence wonderful. Campbell-Bannerman was the only man who ever talked about the Queen to me. Then I told him the story of Campbell-Bannerman's account of John Burns being described to the Queen as her Inspector-General of Tommy Atkins.

'"Ah, John Burns," said the Prince. "He does not seem to be getting on very well with the County Council. They seem to have got into some trouble there. It may be very bad. It looks bad. The provincial town councils are all right, they are very good, but the London County Council is too big. I have never been in love with the L.C.C. It is too immense. Their people have to handle things they cannot have personal knowledge of, and I am afraid there is a good deal more behind this scandal in the Works Department."

'I defended the County Council as best I could, and that was what led up to the discussion about Party. He said there was far too much Party in it, and that they were more intent upon attacking each other than looking after the welfare of other people. Then, reverting to the opportunities of his position and what he might do, I said that I personally felt grateful to him, as I had felt during the Penjdeh time that Sandringham was the centre of light and hope, and that he was able to help the Tsar to understand things and make the English people understand Russia.

'I said, "You know I have always been an advocate of the Anglo-Russian alliance."

'"Yes," he said. "And I am all for that entirely."

'"Yes. I understood that you had always rendered good service

there, and I regard you with gratitude for services rendered and that at a time when Her Majesty, I am very much afraid, was in the opposite camp."

'"Ah," he said, "she is very much better now. In '78 she was much more under the influence of the memories and the traditions of the Crimean War."

'That, I said, was one good thing. I felt that if the Queen had done good service in the American War, he had done good service with regard to Russia. Then, I said, there was one speech of his which I always remembered with pleasure, and he asked me what it was, and I said it was a mere sentence, but it sounded the true note; I had frequently cited it, for nothing had been so truly and timely said. It was that in which he said that we should always act as if every one who lived in Canada or Australia was as much an Englishman and a citizen of our common country, as though he lived in Kent or Sussex. "That," I said, "is the whole Imperial question in a phrase."

'"Ah," he said. "And what do you think of the Navy League? The Duke of Devonshire made a speech about it the other day."

'That, I said, was a question of detail, of machinery for giving effect to a sentiment. The thing was to create the sentiment, and I felt if we could live up to that sentence a great deal would be done. "For instance," I said, "I should be awfully glad if you could help on the movement in favour of Imperial Penny Postage. You see, if we have all to be Englishmen the same as if we lived in Kent or Sussex, we ought to be able to correspond by the penny post."

'"Yes," he said, "but there are difficulties in the way."

'"Yes, but these difficulties have to be overcome. There are difficulties in the way of everything."

'Then I said it was a long time since he had been in America.

'"Yes," he said. "Not since I was a boy."

'He would like to go to South Africa very much, he continued. His brother had been to Australia and his two boys had been round the world, but he had only been to Canada and India. " India," he said, "was my great tour."

'Then I said: "Don't you think you should go round the Empire? It would do a world of good."

'"Yes," he replied, "I should like nothing better, but you see I am tied down by engagements."

'"But you broke them to go to India, and it is much more important

you should go to Australia and Africa. For India is held by the sword, whereas the Colonies are held by bonds of affection."

'"Yes," he said, "I understand, and I should like to go very much."

'"Well," I said, "You are something like Gulliver in Lilliput, tied down by all the hairs in your head to the ground, but the Doctor is the way out! You must be made out ill! Lord Salisbury made me out ill when I was in jail and had to be made a first-class misdemeanant. It was he who discovered that my life was in imminent danger! So I was informed by the doctor who came to report, though I myself declared I had never felt better in my life. We must make *you* ill now so that you may have a long voyage in order to recover your health."

'"Well," he said, "I should like to go to South Africa. That is the place to see."

'Then he asked: "You know Lord Salisbury?"

'"No," I said, "I don't. He has always been very good to me by correspondence, but he will never meet me." And I told him about Sir Robert Morier's brusque way at St. Petersburg, and how he offended the Duchess of Edinburgh, and also about his wishing he had dynamite to blow me and Mr. Gladstone to hell.

'"Well," he said, "perhaps when Lord Salisbury is out of office you will meet him."

'He evidently seemed to think there was something wrong in my not having met him.

'I said, "No, I did not care to push myself to see people unless it was necessary to get things done, when I would push hard enough." Then I praised Arthur Balfour, saying of him what I always say of him – that he is a good man to have at your back in a fight but that he is a little too indifferent.

'"Ah," he said, "he never reads the papers, you know."

'Then we talked of Morley, and I told him the story about "notes for the Prince of Wales."

'This was the only passage in my conversation I felt doubtful about. Brett said afterwards it was quite right.

'He said Morley was better as a literary man than as a politician; that he came into politics too late, and it was a great pity he was not more loyal to Rosebery.

'I said I liked Rosebery very much, but I thought it was hardly a case for complaint about lack of loyalty, as Rosebery did not seem

able to command the support of his colleagues by force of character or persuasiveness of reasoning.

'By this time he had smoked two cigars. He now got up and we walked upstairs to the drawing-room, where Lady Warwick was lying down with a quilt over her, her head being bad. I said we ought really to bind her over on no account to go hunting again for the rest of the season for fear she should have another accident, but I was so glad she had escaped with her life, I did not feel inclined to do anything but rejoice. He said I was quite right and that we should do that.

'Then I shook hands with him and departed.'

* * *

Next morning Lady Warwick received a note from the Prince with a friendly allusion in it to his new acquaintance. 'I am grateful to you,' he said, 'for giving me the opportunity of meeting a remarkable man who made a far more favourable impression on me than I ever believed possible. Some day I hope to hear from you the impression I made on him.'

The sympathetic hostess passed on these words to Stead at once, adding that she intended the mutual feeling of interest shown by her guests to grow presently into 'a mutual friendship.' That, however, was not really to be expected, as Lady Warwick now confesses with a smile, – the incompatibility of the two characters was too wide to be bridged. But it was a memorable experiment!

## CHAPTER 23

# THE TSAR'S RESCRIPT AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE AT THE HAGUE, 1898–1899

### I

### THE RESCRIPT AND WHAT LED UP TO IT

It is no exaggeration to say that 'all Europe was amazed' when Nicholas II of Russia issued his Rescript in August 1898. I quote the words from Mr. Howard Evans's *Life of Sir Randal Cremer*. W. R. Cremer (as he was styled before his knighthood) and W. T. Stead were probably the two men in the whole world who were most thrilled by the news of the Tsar's action. History may say that they were the two men, also, who counted for most in prompting it.

Outside the comparatively small circle of social reformers and Peace enthusiasts Cremer's name is almost forgotten, and yet he was the incarnation of all that was best and bravest in England. Born in 1828 at Farnham, the son of a labourer, at twelve pitch-boy in a shipyard, by the time he was forty Cremer had come to be looked upon – not in this country alone but throughout the Continent – as the finest type of the intellectual and idealistic working-man. In 1870 he founded the International Arbitration League, in 1877 he organized the first Conference (in Paris) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is difficult to say which of the two men, Cremer or Stead, worked the more strenuously for Peace and Arbitration, but their methods were strangely different. We have seen how Stead always scattered his energies. Cremer concentrated. 'For nearly forty years,' says his biographer, 'Cremer set before himself a task which might have daunted the greatest statesmen in Europe. . . . He said, "This one thing I can do"; and to this one thing every other consideration was subordinate.'

Perhaps, in truth, there were no greater statesmen in Europe just then than 'Honest Bill Cremer' and 'that good man Stead.' [1]

Many theories have been formulated as to the influences which moved the Tsar. In the *Review of Reviews* Annual for 1899, entitled 'The United States of Europe,' Stead traced the germ of the Rescript

[1] So *Punch* called Cremer, and so Carlyle once, in 1877, called Stead. Carlyle had been reading some of Stead's articles in the *Northern Echo* and approved of them.

to a confidential State Paper prepared at Lord Salisbury's instance in 1891, in which the actual cost of militarism in Europe was set forth in detail. Meant originally for the exclusive use of the British Cabinet, this document was later communicated by Lord Salisbury to the German Emperor, who was so much impressed by it that he privately intimated his intention of summoning a European Congress to consider practical measures for assuring universal peace. But Alsace-Lorraine stood in the way and the project was stopped.

In the *Review of Reviews* for May 1894, Stead himself [1] pressed the question 'whether the time had not come for the people collectively to make a stand against the steady increase of armaments,' and suggested that the true line to take was to seek an international agreement by which the Powers should bind themselves not to allow their military and naval Budgets to pass beyond their present limits till the end of the century.

The idea had already been taken up by a Conference of the Free Churches, held in April of that year, and presently a national Memorial was addressed to the British Government, urging it to open negotiations with all the European Powers as 'a first step' towards the desired end. 'While the Memorial was still in course of signature,' Stead writes, 'but acting under the inspiration of the movement of which it was the visible outcome, Lord Rosebery communicated with M. de Staal on the subject, suggesting the desirability of the initiative in this matter being taken by the Tsar.' But the Chino-Japanese war and the death of Alexander III of Russia put a stop to further discussion of the project.

It was not until 1896 that it could be revived with any prospect of success. In that year the Inter-Parliamentary Conference was held at Buda-Pesth. Russia was not officially represented at the Conference, but M. Basili, the Russian Consul-General in the Hungarian capital, attended its meetings, 'took a deep interest in the proceedings and reported strongly to his Government in favour of action and the stay of armaments. His suggestion was not received with approval by his official superiors and it remained for a long time in abeyance.'

Then came a notable utterance by Lord Salisbury on November 9, 1897, deprecating the continual increase in armaments, and M. Basili, now established in the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg, again renewed

[1] At the instigation of his brother, Mr. Herbert Stead, who gives his account of the matter in a volume entitled *The Unseen Leadership*.

his efforts. Count Lamsdorf, his chief, submitted the proposal to Tsar Nicholas and it was accepted. The Rescript was the result.

The Rescript began by stating that 'the maintenance of the general peace, and a possible reduction of the excessive armaments which weigh upon all nations, present themselves in the existing condition of the whole world as the ideal towards which the efforts of all Governments should be directed'; and it ended by inviting all the Governments whose representatives were accredited to the Russian Court to attend a Conference the object of which was to focus the efforts of all the States which were sincerely seeking to make the great conception of Universal Peace triumph over the elements of trouble and discord.

Europe was, indeed, amazed to see these proposals coming from the Tsar of Russia – amazed and bewildered. Were they the outcome of some crafty political design, or were they meant sincerely? The situation was still unpropitious in the extreme. War had been threatening between France and England over Fashoda – perhaps it would have come but for the internal discussion over the Dreyfus cause by which France was lacerated. New sources of strife had opened in China. Talk of peace measures at such a moment seemed Quixotic and unpractical in the extreme. Before many weeks had passed it really looked as though the Rescript might come to nothing. Those who sympathized with it and believed in it were for the most part too much disheartened or too torpid to move. It was everybody's business, they recognized, to back up the Tsar, but everybody's business was nobody's business. *Nobody's except Stead's!* That old adage never applied to him! What was everybody's business was in a pre-eminent degree *his* business, and we shall see now how he went about it. We shall smile sometimes at his way of doing things: often undignified; unscrupulous in a quite harmless fashion, occasionally; but incredibly energetic and indomitable and in the end wonderfully successful. We shall smile, but our chief feelings will scarcely be of amusement, especially if we ourselves, while giving him our good-will throughout his campaignings and crusadings, gave him little else. To the out-and-out sceptic or cynic or pessimist to whom Stead's efforts seemed a mere absurdity they will seem absurd still - perhaps, in the light of the great world war, more absurd than ever. But in the hearts of many of us who merely looked on lethargically they will evoke respect and admiration tinged with envy and with regrets.

## II

### A TALK WITH MR. BALFOUR AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE

How to infect other people with his own ardour, how to convince them that the Tsar was sincere – these were Stead's problems. He was not long about deciding what to do. He must at once see Nicholas II personally, as well as everyone else on the Continent whose support would be worth having. By the end of September he had made his plans for a tour of all the chief Capitals of Europe.

Among the many personages of note whom he consulted before leaving London were M. Lessar, of the Russian Embassy, and Mr. Balfour; Lord Salisbury being abroad at the time, Mr. Balfour was in charge at the Foreign Office. Stead's talk with him was delightfully characteristic.

M. Lessar, who in the absence of M. de Staal was acting Ambassador, proved to be much more preoccupied with what he called Great Britain's manifest hostility against Russia than with the Rescript. He himself recognized, he said, that at some far distant date the two countries might be driven into war, but surely, he urged, nothing could be more wanton than the forcing of an immediate quarrel by England upon the Power which of all others was 'least formidable and most backward in the rivalry of the nations.'

M. Lessar proceeded to deliver a very interesting discourse upon the actual condition of Russia, politically and commercially, and, in particular, upon the Russian attitude in regard to China, as compared with that of the United States. It was against the Americans, he declared, that Great Britain would first be fighting – the Americans would presently want elbow room and would strike for the supremacy of the seas. From Russia, on the other hand, the British had nothing whatsoever to fear – all that Russia asked was that no European Power should have any political control of the province of Manchuria through which, by the Trans-Siberian railway, she had secured access to the Pacific. And yet, although the door was open to British trade and although Russia really needed British manufactures, Great Britain, by the action of Sir Claude MacDonald, then British Ambassador at Peking, was threatening her with the introduction of British political influence into Manchuria, thus provoking anxiety and irritation.

In this mood of resentment against England, M. Lessar was inclined

at first to view with disfavour Stead's project of a visit to Russia to see the Tsar, but on reflection he agreed that it might be useful.

Next day Stead called by appointment to see Mr. Balfour. Strangely enough it was the first time he had ever penetrated into the Foreign Secretary's stately offices, and he was struck by 'the gorgeousness of the tapestry, ceilings, etc.' 'I remarked upon it,' he records, 'to Mr. Balfour, who shrugged his shoulders and said he thought it was all "very vulgar." '

Ireland, not the Rescript, was the first topic the two men discussed – Stead tremendously in earnest and downright and strenuous, Mr. Balfour nonchalant and ironical. He was 'always willing to talk about Ireland,' the latter presently declared, he 'liked no subject better.' But if they did not get away from it soon not a word would be said about anything else. 'In another moment,' he threatened, 'I shall fire off a speech at you on Ireland that will leave no time for any other subject!'

Thus warned, Stead came to the question of his Russian visit, beginning with a summary of M. Lessar's complaints concerning the British action in Manchuria – above all, 'the perfidy and trickery' of Sir Claude MacDonald's attempt to make a Treaty Port. He himself entirely agreed with the Russian view of this matter. 'I do not want you to be under any mistake,' he continued, 'as to what I shall say when I go to Russia. It is my intention, if I see the Emperor or Muravieff [1] or any of them, to give you away with both hands in this matter. There is nothing too bad they can say about this ice-free port and Claude MacDonald. I feel that it is a national humiliation that we should have been guilty of such bad faith.'

There followed an exchange of views upon Anglo-Russian relations generally which deserve, I think, to be given here in full. It is a very typical example of Stead's talk.

'What I cannot understand,' remarked Mr. Balfour, 'is how, with your ideas, you can contemplate with such an apparently light heart the increasing growth of the power of Russia. For *our* time it is nothing to me. But what of our children? – I shall never have any, but our nephews and nieces, and those who will come after us? What kind of world will it be when Russia, which has already a hundred and twenty million inhabitants, exercises an enormously dominating influence over the whole of the south-east of Europe? What kind of

[1] The Russian Prime Minister.

Europe will it be, dominated by the Slavs – with a Hungary barely able to hold her own, with a strong Germany, I suppose, but what else?'

'Well,' said Stead, 'to that there are several replies. First I think the Russian is a very good fellow, I think that the Russian race possess many great fundamental virtues with which it will be very good to inoculate the human race at large. Secondly, I do not think that I have any responsibility whatever as to the greatness of Russia in the future and the future strength of the Slavonic race. That is a matter for which I am no more responsible than I am for the fact that there are four hundred million Chinese in the world. Looking at the matter from the point of view of Martha in *Concerning Isabel Carnaby* – you have read Miss Fowler's novel?'

'Oh yes,' said Mr. Balfour, 'I have read it.'

'Well,' continued Stead, 'it is as Martha would say, a case for doing our duty and leaving Providence to take the consequences. Now, we have not done our duty to Russia – we have failed in our duty.'

'I don't agree with you,' said Mr. Balfour.

'I am only setting forth my point of view,' replied Stead. 'What I feel is that during the whole of the last century we have played the evil part in the East of Europe and Russia has played the good part.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Mr. Balfour, 'that is all very well, but just think of their thwarting us about Armenia, for their own interests and ends, when we were willing to do something for the Armenians.'

'That,' said Stead, 'is a single case and does not count for anything compared with the history of a century. For a hundred years the whole of the idealism of the Russian race, so far as it found any object round which to twine in political affairs, was directed to the liberation of their co-religionists from the yoke of the infidel. It was their religion, their passion, and all this hundred years they saw their ideas thwarted and threatened by England as the ally of the Turk. Hence I feel that I owe a duty personally to the Russians. I felt, before I knew Madame Novikoff, and merely from the circumstances of her brother's death, as if my hands were stained with her brother's blood and I have a great deal to do before I can wipe off the arrears.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Balfour, 'I know you hold that view, but how does that affect this matter?'

'In this way,' I said. 'If I have done wrong to the Russians, my first question is, how can I do right to the Russians, and the question whether or not the Russians will be stronger or weaker is not a

question that can be considered until first I have done my duty. We are only responsible for our duty. There is a third consideration that comes in and causes me to feel that to act on righteous principles in this matter is also sound policy from the point of view to which you allude. The alternative before us is not whether Russia shall be great or whether she shall be weak, but whether she shall be influenced in the direction of what we consider to be sound English principles or whether she shall be driven into antagonism to her. Agreed, that the Slav will dominate the whole of Eastern Europe. That is a matter which we cannot prevent. But if we are friends with the Slav he may sympathetically imbibe all that is best in our civilization, and the Slav domination will thereby come to be less menacing, than would be the case if, by adopting a policy of antagonism, we were to hermetically seal the Slavonic mind against any ideas proceeding from the enemy. There is a fourth point also which always weighs with me a good deal. I do not believe in long looks ahead. For at this moment some obscure chemist may be making a discovery in his laboratory which will revolutionize the relations of human beings.'

'You mean,' Mr. Balfour said, 'by some explosive that may render war impossible?'

'Either that or some invention which may enormously increase the power of the small unit against the great political aggregation in some way – no one can say what. Depend upon it, God Almighty has many tricks up His sleeve of which we know nothing. What we have got to do is to do the right.'

'There is a great deal to be said for that,' said Mr. Balfour. 'Of course,' he added, 'I am pro-Russian, and I am all for having an understanding with Russia, and for being on the best possible terms with her that we can be. But she ought not to make it too difficult for us.'

'Well,' rejoined Stead, 'the practical question I want to put to you is this. I have told you what I am going to say to the Russians. I have told you what I am going to say to the Tsar, or whoever is behind the Tsar. I have told you that I do not ask you to say whether you approve of my going to Russia, because that would be to assume a responsibility which I ought not to ask you to assume. What I do ask is this. Knowing what I have told you, do you feel, from the knowledge in your possession that you would be justified in saying to me "Don't go?" '

'No,' Mr. Balfour said; 'but you will go upon your own responsibility absolutely. I entirely disclaim any responsibility for your action in any case. But if I were to forbid your going, I should take upon myself a very great responsibility, and that I refuse. I am going to have no responsibility in this matter at all.'

'Thank you,' Stead replied, 'that is just what I wanted, and in order to relieve you from any shadow of responsibility, I may tell you that if you had felt yourself bound to forbid my going to Russia I should have felt that that was the very strongest reason why I should pack up my traps and be off at once. So you see by the answer you have given you have absolutely relieved yourself of any responsibility one way or the other.'

## III

### KING LEOPOLD AND THE KAISER HOLD ALOOF. M. CLEMENCEAU THROW SCOLD WATER

Of all his Continental tours the one on which Stead now embarked was, I think, the most noteworthy, and, despite disappointments, it was the one which he himself seems to have most enjoyed. There had been a touch of the gambler's throw about the visit to Tsar Alexander in 1888; it proved an exhilarating experience but it was attended by many misgivings and anxieties. Now he was his own master – there was no Mr. Yates Thompson to dazzle into submission! With no personal considerations to preoccupy him, he could give his mind almost entirely to his great purpose, while, of course, not neglecting the *Review of Reviews* or the requirements of the various newspapers for which he was to correspond. Of these, the most important were the *Daily News* and the *New York Journal*. For the latter he was to write not solely about the Rescript, but also about European politics in general in so far as they related to America.

The tour was to have its disappointments, as I have said. The first setback came at Brussels. A couple of pages of typewritten notes which Stead prepared in advance for the benefit of the Belgian newspaper interviewers, show us how artfully he had baited his hook to catch King Leopold. The King at this time, it must be remembered, was one of the most highly respected figures in Europe: the horrors of the Congo were as yet unrevealed.

The purposes of the tour? Stead imagined his interviewers asking: Well, in the first place, to ascertain the attitude of the leaders of thought and action throughout Europe in regard to the Tsar's proposal; in the second place, to obtain for the American public the views of the Old World upon the recent development of the New World as a competitor in commerce, in ships and in colonies.

Had he any practical suggestions to make to Belgium in connection with these matters? Yes, in connection with both. The forthcoming conference at The Hague would offer to the minor States of Europe an unprecedented opportunity. In the European Concert, hitherto, Belgium, like all other small countries, had had no voice. In the new Areopagus, why should the small countries not combine, and why should not Belgium be the leader of them all? For such a rôle, was there any state so peculiarly well qualified as Belgium? There was certainly no ruler so capable of conceiving the grandeur of the idea as the Belgian King, none so capable of executing the conception splendidly!

And as regarded America, just about to found a tropical colonial empire in the Philippines, who could give a more valuable opinion upon her problems than King Leopold, with all his Central African possessions, 'eighty times more expansive than the whole of Belgium itself'?

But no! Stead was not to land this particular big fish! His failure is attested by a batch of typewritten copies of his correspondence with King Leopold. The King was at Ostend at the moment and had met with a slight accident which precluded him from granting interviews – that was the first official reply. In a long argumentative rejoinder, Stead worked up to this climax:

'My whole soul recoils from the idea that at the very outset of such a mission as this on which I am charged, I should fail to have the inestimable advantage of the counsel of the most experienced monarch and original genius in Europe. Do not inflict on me, I beseech you, this cruel blow, but graciously accord to me the privilege for which I pray. I await your telegraphic commands.

'I have the honour to be,

'Your Majesty's humble servant.'

How King Leopold was affected by this appeal we must guess for ourselves. At least it moved him to reply in his own hand as follows:

'PAVILLON D'OSTENDE.
'*September* 18, 1898.

'Private.

'MONSIEUR,

'In the note which you have just written me you flatter me far too much, which is not right. Here nevertheless is a frank reply to your note.

'You wish to speak to me of disarmament, I desire with all my heart that it may take place, but I could not in any case usefully say anything to you on the noble aspiration which it is better to leave in the interests of its success to the care of the generous and powerful Emperor who has conceived it.

'You desire a conversation on the Congo, but what could I teach an Englishman concerning an unknown country. No people in the world know it better than the English. As to the Americans they will certainly find (specially) in the Congo elements of (word illegible) for their administrative task if such was their intention.

'Excuse me for not seeing you. I have had to decline several interviews, and I cannot have two weights and two measures,

'Yours, etc.,
'LEOPOLD.'

A lively note written to E. T. Cook a few days later from Paris shows us that Stead, if disappointed, was not disheartened:

'I have had an amusing correspondence (he says) with the King, who has written me an autograph letter and whom I hope to see before I come back. . . . On Monday I shall probably go on to Berlin. My hopes of seeing the Pope are reviving, for I am told that he is as spry as a four-year-old and talks for an hour on end without being tired.'

In Paris, Stead's most interesting experience was a talk with M. Clemenceau, who was then living in the Rue Franklin, No. 8. Here in a ground floor room, opening upon a delightful garden inhabited by a tame partridge and half a dozen other kinds of birds, they discussed the Rescript. 'Nothing can come of it,' M. Clemenceau declared emphatically. 'Even suppose it were possible to keep expenditure on armament stationary for four years, who could

prevent war happening if the Emperor Francis Joseph died? A general scramble for Austria would ensue, and what would become of the engagement then?' It was, he admitted, a remarkable thing that a 'Parliament of Man' should meet at the summons of a Russian Tsar, but even though all the nations should go to it with all good wishes, nothing would come of it.

Stead appealed to him to give the Tsar's proposals a warmer response – not to throw cold water on such a generous enthusiasm.

M. Clemenceau doubted whether it was really so very generous. For himself, he disliked and distrusted Muravieff and thought the Tsar weak, governing by fits and starts. There was much that was wrong in the Tsar's own country – let him do justice there first!

This was poor comfort, and as the Dreyfus case was absorbing everyone's attention just then, Stead fared little better elsewhere in Paris. 'Whether it is Blowitz or Monson (the British Ambassador) or Clemenceau,' he wrote to Mr. John Morley, 'there is only one opinion here, namely, that the Conference can do absolutely nothing and that it may precipitate war.'

In Berlin, also, Stead was to draw a blank. He had counted upon securing an interview with the Kaiser through the good offices of Lord Lonsdale, a *persona gratissima* at Potsdam, to whom he had addressed a carefully-worded letter, and to whom Lady Warwick, always eager to help, had also written on the subject. But after a long delay, owing to Lord Lonsdale's absence from home, the answer came – 'impossible!' The Kaiser, Lord Lonsdale explained, had made it a hard and fast rule to decline all interviews. 'I feel sure,' he said, in concluding a full and explicit letter, very courteously expressed, 'that you will quite realize that owing to His Majesty's extreme kindness to myself it would be impossible and inadvisable to make any request which I knew to be absolutely contrary to His Majesty's feelings in such matters.'

Now, Stead had meant his letter to Lord Lonsdale to come before the Kaiser's own eyes! It was phrased in somewhat extravagant terms of admiration and contained a sentence or two which, in his sanguine way, he had felt quite certain would gain him his point. 'I regard him as a natural born editor in the purple, the first the world has as yet seen, interested in all things, with ideas and ideals, who feels his responsibility and does his duty' – that was a passage, so Stead flattered himself, which William II would scarcely be able

to withstand.[1] It was really too maddening, that the normally bold Lord Lonsdale should have shrunk from employing this 'Open Sesame'!

But does anyone suppose that W. T. Stead gave in at this point? No one who really knows his W. T. Stead! Still hopefully, and in blind refusal to accept defeat, he now proceeded to trample upon the conventions of polite society – to say nothing of Imperial etiquette – with the following unique composition:

'HOTEL CONTINENTAL, PARIS.
'*September* 27, 1898.

'Private.

'His Imperial Majesty,
'the German Emperor.

'SIRE,

'I am on my way to Russia where I expect to have the honour of being received by His Imperial Majesty the Tsar for a private conversation on matters of interest between Russia and England.

'I beg respectfully to request that Your Imperial Majesty will graciously allow me a similar privilege for reasons which are fully set out in the enclosed copy of a letter which I addressed to Lord Lonsdale on September 3.

'Lord Lonsdale has just written me saying that Your Majesty has always made a hard and fast rule to decline all interviews and that it would be impossible and inadvisable *for him* to make any request which he knew to be contrary to Your Majesty's feelings in such matters.

'Therefore I write to Your Majesty direct. I do not recognize any authority but your own as qualified to pronounce on an application of this kind. I do not seek a journalistic interview. I am well aware that monarchs are never interviewed. Further, the rule of the Russian Emperors is as absolute on this point as that of your Imperial Majesty can possibly be. But I have been received by the late Tsar, and in a fortnight I expect to be received by his successor.

'It is true that I am a journalist. But I am also a man and a faithful and loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen. I cannot believe that Your Majesty would subject me to any disability merely on account

[1] He had discussed it with Mr. Balfour before putting it on paper, and Mr. Balfour, we are told, had smilingly agreed that it should prove irresistible.

of my profession any more than you would refuse to receive me on account of my English birth or of my religious beliefs.

'In any case I claim the privilege of appealing direct to Your Majesty to decide my appeal yourself on its own merits. I have had too much experience of the way in which persons who stand near the Sovereign, often with the best will in the world, misinterpret what would probably be his decision, to acquiesce in any decision but your own.

'I expect to arrive in Berlin on Thursday morning, and sincerely hope that I may find a gracious reply from Your Majesty complying with my request. If possible, I should of course prefer to see your Majesty before going to Russia, but if that is impossible, as I shall return from Livadia by Constantinople, it might be possible to meet in the East. [*sic*]

'The only address I can give in Berlin is c/o The British Embassy. Sir F. Lascelles is not aware of this application, which, however, I discussed with Mr. Balfour at the Foreign Office before leaving London.

'I have the honour to subscribe myself,

'Your Majesty's humble and obedient servant,

'WILLIAM T. STEAD.'

Apparently it had no result!

## IV

### STEAD AND THE TSAR NICHOLAS

Stead's letters to the *Daily News* from Paris and Berlin reflected quite candidly the unfavourable attitude of most of the people with whom he had conversed; the Belgians, indeed, he had found more expansive than their King. Many of them were enthusiastic, and a Belgian ex-Prime Minister, just returned to Brussels from Rome, had cheered him by the assurance that Leo XIII and Cardinal Rampolla were strongly in favour of the proposed Conference. Of the French and the Germans, however, this is what he had to report:

'Men of the world, men of experience, men of affairs, above all, men who are deeply versed in the tortuous wiles of diplomacy, agree in expecting nothing from the Conference of Disarmament and in fearing much. If the hard-pressed toilers of the world are to obtain any appreciable relief from the crushing load of Militarism, they will have to extend to the generous initiative of the Tsar a much more

hearty reception. . . . The Democracy may help the Autocracy to achieve this boon for the English race. It will certainly not reach them at the hands of Bureaucracy.'

His first letter from St. Petersburg was in a very different strain. It is headed, 'Glad Tidings of Great Joy: The Opportunity of the Century!' and begins thus:

'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream, then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, "The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." '

'In these familiar words alone do I find adequate expression to the lift of heart which I have experienced on coming to St. Petersburg. From Brussels to Paris, from Paris to Berlin, my pilgrimage of peace had been but a dolorous way, growing ever darker and more dark until it seemed as if there was no hope.

'But it is ever the darkest hour before the dawn. Here where I have now spent several days in ascertaining the central fact of the situation it is glad confident morning again. The snow is beginning to fall in the streets of St. Petersburg, but in my heart "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of birds is come." '

He had quickly satisfied himself, he went on to say, that all the gloomy suggestions of pessimism were without foundation. The Tsar meant business, if most of his Ministers did not; and it was the Tsar that mattered. But it is evident from his private notes to Mr. John Morley and to Mr. Bryce, as well as from a typewritten record of an interview which he had with Dr. Dillon, then in St. Petersburg, that his mood was not always so buoyant. 'A weak man,' Dr. Dillon had described the Tsar, 'and very impressionable.' Nicholas II had just reversed the entire Polish policy of his father at the instigation of Mlle. Jacousky, a Polish dancer at the Opera. Stead, Dr. Dillon declared, could not count on exercising any permanent influence through the Tsar – no reliance could be placed on his continuing in any one line of thought. His father, Alexander III, was a veritable Bayard who, having once given his word, kept it at all hazards. Muravieff, Dr. Dillon said, was a man of strength and energy

rather than of intellect, prepared to fall in with any policy the Tsar suggested but grimly humorous over the Rescript. Moreover, feeling in Russia at that moment was almost entirely anti-English – a conflict with England seemed inevitable.

'I am satisfied as to his sincerity,' Stead wrote to Bryce on October 11, referring to the Tsar. 'The point on which I wish to satisfy myself is as to his strength, for it will require a nerve of iron to conduct a campaign of peace against so many hostile influences. I have, however, great hopes that, if he is not absolutely chilled to death by the mocking scepticism of his Ministers and Diplomats, he may develop, as his father and grandfather did, a resolution which no opposition can daunt.' To Morley he spoke in the same strain. 'I believe M. Witte,' he said, 'is the only Minister who cares for the proposal.'

But his St. Petersburg experiences, beyond a doubt, did in the long run cheer him up. His fortnight there was well spent. It may be confidently surmised that no foreign journalist ever interviewed so many 'notabilities' in the Russian capital within so short a space of time. The most important talk was with M. Witte. In his next *Daily News* letter Stead wrote:

'I put to the Minister the frequently stated difficulty about the contrast between the £10,000,000 allocated for extra naval purposes in spring and the Peace Rescript of late midsummer. He replied at once:

'"If the Peace Rescript had been issued seven months earlier we should have saved all these millions. We cannot get them back, but we shall now be delivered from the fear of seeing other millions take the same road."

'M. Witte was most jubilant over the Peace Rescript. He explained to me that the famous invitation to the Powers. . . . immensely relieved M. Witte himself. For it need not be stated that in Russia, as in other countries, the army and navy are veritable daughters of the horse-leech, perpetually crying "Give! Give!" The new quick-firing guns for the field artillery are to be put in hand without delay. Universal military service is to be enforced in Finland, the new ships ordered and now in course of construction have to be paid for. Altogether, the assault on the Treasury is not likely to be lacking in vigour and persistence. But M. Witte is no longer afraid. "Henceforth," he said, "if my colleagues should clamour for more millions

for the army and the navy I shall have no more trouble in rebutting their demands. I shall simply hold up the Emperor's Rescript and they will not be able to say a word."'

October 26 was the date of Stead's arrival at Sebastopol, and of the first of his three interviews with the Tsar at Livadia. What struck him most was the contrast between the homely surroundings of Nicholas II, and the solemn state in which he had found Alexander III at Gatschina nine years before. On that occasion he had been unable 'to escape from a certain all-pervading sentiment of awe.' He now wrote:

'How different it was at Livadia! There was no mystery, no distance, no solitude, no sense of undefinable danger. There are few more beautiful spots in Europe than the neighbourhood of Yalta. The drive to Livadia up hill and down dale, which we took at breakneck speed, between the mountains and the sea, is magnificent. The Euxine, not a black but an azure sea, stretches out far below, an immense expanse of sunlit water, across which flit interminable strings of birds, migrating southward from the approach of winter. The Mediterranean, seen from the Riviera, never looked more radiantly beautiful than did the Black Sea on the day when I visited Livadia. On the way you come at every turn upon something quaint and strange. Now it is a string of creaking country carts drawn by diminutive oxen, then it is the curious stage wagon of the Crimea, like a long double bench, on which the passengers sit back to back with their legs dangling in the air. Suddenly you hear a trampling of hoofs, and a gay cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen, splendidly mounted and escorted by picturesque Tartars, gallop by, calling up I know not by what strange association of ideas a flood of mingled memories of "The Bride of Abydos" and of the hawking parties of the Middle Ages. A gilded landmark indicates the point where the road to Livadia turns to the left from the high road. The driver removes the bells from the horse's neck, we show our *laisser passer* to the officer in command at the entrance, and then we dash along a road good enough to be made in France, through the undulating vineyards in the midst of which Livadia stands. The vineyards are studded with prettily-designed watch-towers from which soldiers, standing on sentry, keep a vigilant eye upon all possible marauders or interlopers. A sailor paces backward and forward under the

Russian flag which floats high above the trees. A Circassian, apparently on duty, glances at you as you drive by, but other traces of vigilance there are none, any more than in the grounds at Balmoral, or in the Park at Windsor.'

It was perhaps inevitable that Stead on this occasion should form too favourable an estimate of the personality of the ill-fated Nicholas. The Tsar was typically Russian in his responsiveness and anxiety to please [1] and Stead's enthusiasm over the Rescript could not but be gratifying to him. His visitor evidently saw him at his best. In the light of his tragic end Stead's glowing account of him reads dismally enough:

'When I set out on my quest, I was told that the Emperor was weak physically and mentally. He was said to be the mere tool of the "wily Mouravieff" or the obedient puppet now of the Empress-Dowager, and then of the present Empress. He was a good-hearted young man, no doubt, but possessing neither the physical nor intellectual qualities to make a great Sovereign. Even those who spoke kindly of him said that although he was well-meaning, he had no decision of character, and that he constantly allowed his own convictions and inclinations to be overshadowed by the authority of the Ministers whom he inherited from his father. And, finally, I was always told not to think too much of the Rescript, for the Emperor was not strong enough to bear up against the forces brought to bear against him.

'Nicholas II in stature does not resemble his father, who was a son of Anak. It is a mistake, however, to speak of him as if he were exceptionally slight. He is about the same height as General Gordon, whom he resembles in other things besides the number of his inches. . . . The Tsar is full of vitality, quick and active in his movements, fond of outdoor exercise. Certainly no one meeting him for the first time would put him down among the weakly.

The first and most conspicuous characteristic of Alexander III was

[1] Almost all visitors to Russia have remarked on this aspect of the national character. In his very interesting book, *Nicholas II as I Knew Him*, General Sir John Hanbury-Williams, chief of the British Military Mission at Petrograd in 1915, writes: 'Hospitality, kindness, sympathy are found everywhere, and it sometimes strikes me that it is this intense desire to please, to make you happy and at home, which makes for weakness and want of stability.' The Tsar was pleased with Sir John's way of looking at him. 'I do like people,' he said once, 'who look you straight in the face.' Stead also will have won the Tsar's liking in this respect.

the solidity – it would be wrong to call it the stolidity – of his mental temperament. He was by no means dull. But he was slow. He put his foot down like an elephant, and when he put it down he was not quick to take it up again. The characteristic of his son and successor is quite different. The note of his intellectual temperament is that of extreme alertness. As he is also extremely sympathetic, this makes him one of the most charming persons to talk to I have ever met. The two qualities were also united in General Gordon, whose nimbleness of mind was so excessive that it was somewhat difficult to keep up with him. If, in talking to the late Tsar, you were at a loss for a word or an illustration, he patiently waited until you found it. His son, on the other hand, would divine your meaning and help you out. He is as quick as a needle, and quite as bright. . . . I have seldom met anyone so quick to seize a point. Whatever he may fail in, it will not be in lack of capacity to see and understand.

'This exceptional rapidity of perception is united with a remarkable memory and a very wide grasp of an immense range of facts. I know at least some eminent English politicians holding high office who, in this respect, are a mournful contrast to the Emperor. When questioned even about the affairs of their own department, their fingers seem to be all thumbs. They have not got their dates right, or they are vague and misty about the exact drift of important negotiations. There are plenty of such woolly-minded men in high places, and it is a real pleasure to meet anyone who has his facts at his finger ends, who tells you in a flash what was done or what was not done, and whose ideas, be they right or wrong, are lucidly expressed in a very definite form. Alertness, exactness, lucidity, and definiteness are four excellent qualities in a man, and the Emperor has them all. . . . Many years ago Mr. Gladstone described the present Emperor as a charming type of the best of our public schoolboys. He was frank, fearless, perfectly natural, and simplicity itself. Nicholas II is no longer a boy. He has borne for several trying years the burden of one of the greatest Empires in the world. But he is still as absolutely simple and unaffected as he was when Mr. Gladstone met him in Copenhagen fifteen years ago. There is still in him all the delightful schoolboy *abandon* of manner, a keen sense of humour, and a hearty, outspoken frankness in expressing his opinions which makes you feel that you are dealing with a man whose character is as transparent as crystal.

'Add to all this a modesty as admirable as it is rare, and it must be admitted that even if the net human product should fall short of being a great ruler, he has at least all the qualities which make men beloved by their fellows. The bright, clear, blue eye, the quick, sympathetic change of feature, the merry laugh, succeeded in a moment by an expression of noble gravity and of high resolve, the rapidity and grace of his movements, even his curious little shrug of the shoulders, are all glimpses of a character not often found unspoiled by power.'

Stead's appreciation of the Tsar was, one feels, absolutely real, not merely 'worked up' in the interest of the Peace movement. A hurried note, posted from Yalta to Mr. Stout immediately after his first interview, confirms one in this belief.

'I saw the Tsar yesterday,' he writes, 'that is why I telegraphed "Succeeded." He is much better than I expected. If only we back him up, we get the best chance we ever had of saving millions. It is a perfect godsend to have such a man in such a place with such ideas. 'Fortunately he is young and strong and full of vigour and go. I have to see him again to-morrow. I like him and think I see great prospects.'

## V

### STEAD, CARDINAL RAMPOLLA, AND THE POPE

Stead, travelling by Constantinople, Sofia, and Vienna, reached Rome on November 11. He remained there about a fortnight, busying himself as actively as ever. Among his papers are entertaining records of his encounters with the British and Russian Ambassadors and other prominent personages. Some pages of suggestions in manuscript for the benefit of Princess Bariatinsky, a valued friend, show us how he was wont to set his helpers to work. The first page runs as follows:

'*Ideal.* So to make use of every day that by the first of March when the Conference meets you will know the sentiment of every person who is of any influence in Rome on the subject and that the utmost force of your heart and mind to win for the cause of Peace every such person.

'*Motto.* Once to every man or nation
Comes the moment to decide.
In the strife for truth or falsehood
For the good or evil side.
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight
Parts the goats upon the left hand,
And the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by for ever, 'twixt that darkness and that light. LOWELL.

'*Methods.* See the enclosed French and English prospectuses. See also the Countess de Ressi who got up the signatures of 40,000 women for peace. Let your first object be to ascertain in a book with brief description "Friendly," "Unfriendly," "Apathetic," or "Enthusiastic." Having ascertained – and possibly at the same time – try to convert them and make them as enthusiastic as yourself. For organization, have it as simple as possible. The first thing is to get up a roll-call and muster all who are in sympathy and from these you will be able to select workers and to each of these you might entrust the formation of a circle for whose inspiration and guidance and holding together, she might be answerable.'

But more interesting than any other of his Roman mementoes is an account of his thoughts and sayings and doings on the day of his visit to the Vatican, November 14. It begins with these reflections in his own handwriting:

'November 14, 1898. Zechariah i. 15. "And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction" (Read also from 14 to 17 ending "the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.") Woke at 5 and meditated and prayed for guidance. The ideas herein expressed were borne in upon me. I put them down. Hoping I may be helped. It is difficult. I want to enlist as assisting force in a holy war, a power whose instinct is to refuse all if not conceded all. I cannot believe in the claims of the Pope to be sole director of moral forces of the world. His infallibility is almost unthinkable. The prejudice he excites almost counter-

balances – in some places more than counterbalances – the support he might bring. But on the whole he is not a force to be neglected or ignored. To get him into line without compromising our rejection of his pretensions, that is difficult. But fear not, neither be dismayed! He who delivered me from the lion and the bear will surely enable me to cope with this Philistine. May God guide my pen and instruct my tongue. Amen.'

Having thus relieved his mind, Stead proceeded to draft the conditions on which he understood the interview with the Pope would take place, 'the object desired, and then the statement of my own point of view.' Here, in full, is the latter section of it – as Stead-like a page as Stead ever penned:

'1. I accept as starting point the Imperial Rescript of August 24, which emphasizes warnings often uttered by the Pope.

'2. I have just visited all the capitals of Europe in order to ascertain the opinion of the Continent on the subject.

'3. I have had two long conversations with the Emperor of Russia on the subject, and can speak, at first hand, but unofficially, as to his views and wishes.

'4. My general conclusion is that the Emperor is in serious earnest, and that if he is energetically supported a definite advance may be made in the direction of Peace. Otherwise the Conference will come to nothing.

'5. Everywhere statesmen are despondent, the Church apathetic or indifferent, the common people distrustful or ill-informed, and the journalists more sceptical than their own journals. But all over the Continent there are those who rejoice with exceeding great joy over the Rescript and are ready to rally to the support of the Emperor.

'6. The success of the great Popes of the Middle Ages in imposing the Truce of God on behalf of civilized Europe, suggests the possibility that their talented successor may be not less successful if he energetically supported the initiative of the Emperor in establishing a new Truce of God at the beginning of the New Century.

'7. The ultimate outcome of the Conference will depend upon the extent to which the heart and conscience of the masses of the people can be roused to respond to the truth so often insisted upon by the Holy Father that the time has at last come when any appeal to arms should be forbidden until after the dispute has been submitted to some arbitral authority as impartial as His Holiness Leo XIII.

'8. To rouse the nations to a sense of great opportunities of international action was once the sole responsibility of the Pontiffs, who alone directed the moral forces of Europe. To-day that responsibility is shared. But the union of all who love in the service of all who suffer cannot be secured in the cause of peace unless the Pope once more revives the splendid traditions of his greatest predecessors by summoning Christendom to respond to the Emperor's appeal.

'9. This being the case, although I was born and I remain outside the Roman fold, I cannot resist the impulse to throw myself at the feet of the Holy Father and implore him to come to the help of a weary and war-worn world, by proclaiming to all men of goodwill in all lands and of all creeds, that the hour has come in the last year of the expiring century, for a new Crusade, the Crusade of peace. The voice of the Holy Father is heard over land and sea, to the uttermost ends of the earth, and even by those who do not bow to the authority of the Papal throne, his words would command the respect due to the most aged, the most saintly, and the most loving-hearted of all the rulers of men.'

His son, Harry, having made a clean copy from the original draft, Stead went with it to Father Whitmee, Rector of San Silvester i Capiti, in whom Cardinal Rampolla had intimated to him he would find a competent interpreter. Father Whitmee read it, and at his instigation Stead modified the seventh paragraph. Father Whitmee suggested that it should end: 'some arbitral authority as impartial as the Holy See,' but Stead would not go as far as that. 'Never!' he exclaimed. 'I will never admit that the Holy See is impartial. I will admit what you like about the present Pope personally, but for any future Pope I will wait till I see him!' Father Whitmee acquiesced and arranged for the translation of the document. Soon after 6 p.m., the translation having been carefully examined by Stead and Father Whitmee, the two drove together to the Vatican to interview Cardinal Rampolla.

It is a great temptation to linger over the MS. chronicle of this interview, as dictated that same evening by Stead to his son, but it is very long, and a quite brief condensation of it must suffice.

Rampolla, Stead tells us, seemed to him to look taller, and to have a more commanding figure than on the occasion of their previous meeting, nine years before. He was attired in exactly the same way, 'scarlet stockings, black robe, scarlet cincture, and little red hat at

the back of his head.' When he extended his hand, Stead, by the advice previously given to him by Father Whitmee, 'made believe to kiss it,' a noteworthy example of the practice of doing at Rome what the Romans do. The Cardinal and Stead then took their seats at opposite ends of a crimson sofa against the wall, Father Whitmee placing himself opposite on a chair.

After some preliminary conversation about Russia and the Tsar, Father Whitmee, who had been interpreting, remarked to Stead that he would do well to present the memorandum. Here I give Stead's own words:

'Father Whitmee explained that it had been translated into Italian so that his Eminence could read it, which he proceeded to do. He read it carefully from the first to the last line. Father Whitmee sat like a statue with his eyes on the ground. I also sat mute, apparently looking at the window near the door, but keeping one corner of my eye fixed on the Cardinal's face. He nodded his head with manifest approval four times. His features showed no sign of displeasure at any time.'

One of the passages of which Cardinal Rampolla signified his approval was, Stead could see, the amended conclusion to the seventh paragraph. Having read the whole document right through, the Cardinal folded it up and said:

' "This is, of course, a matter upon which the Holy Father alone can speak; I will submit your application to him, and will place the paper in his hands. I cannot say anything about his decision." He would, however, do all he could to secure Stead the desired interview with the Pope, and as speedily as possible.'

But it was not to be! Six days passed without any further communication. Two letters to the Cardinal, dated November 20 and November 21 – the Cardinal's replies are missing – show that all Stead's energies bore no fruit. Both letters seem to me worth reproduction here:

'ALBERGO DI MILANO,
'ROME, *November* 20, 1898.

'His Eminence
'The Cardinal Secretary of State,
'The Vatican.

'YOUR EMINENCE,

'Of Rome it has been well said *Patiens quia Aeterna*. But I am but an ephemeral creature of time and my patience necessarily limited.

'Last Monday I submitted to the Holy Father a request for an audience which your Eminence was good enough to promise to support.

'I have now waited a week for an answer. I cannot wait another. The very business on which I came to the Vatican demands my return to London. If the Holy Father is unable or unwilling to comply with my request and your Eminence will permit me, I propose to call upon you on Monday evening to take my leave, present my thanks and express my profound regret that the effort you were so kind as to encourage, should have failed.

'I have the honour to be

'Your Eminence's obedient servant,

'W. T. STEAD.'

'HOTEL MILAN,

'ROME, *November* 21, 1898.

'The Cardinal Secretary of State,

'Cardinal Rampolla.

'YOUR EMINENCE,

'I am afraid I have failed in conveying to the mind of your Eminence and of the Holy Father, the importance of the matter before you and its bearing upon the question as to whether or not the Holy See will be represented at the Peace Conference?

'I have heard much since I came to Rome that has occasioned me much misgiving as to whether the presence of the representative of the Holy Father would conduce to the success of the Conference. If I have no opportunity of hearing from your Eminence and the Holy Father how to answer these difficulties and objections, I am afraid that the result will be that the conference will assemble without the presence of any representative of the Pope. This has not hitherto been manifest to your Eminence and I would therefore as a last resource earnestly appeal to you not to allow me to leave Rome without an opportunity of hearing authoritatively the truth concerning the attitude of the Holy See in relation to this matter.

'I have the honour to be

'Your Eminence's obedient servant,

'W. T. STEAD.'

Alas! it was useless. Even this second epistle failed of its purpose, and Stead left Rome disconsolately without his Papal interview. But,

as usual, he made the best of things. The following extracts from the issue of *War against War* for January 27, 1899, will complete the story for us. Together with the printed text of his 'memorandum,' and a facsimile of the Cardinal's autograph letter, they fill a very impressive, almost triumphant, page:

'I left Rome before the Pope's answer could be secured and returned to England.

'The International Crusade of Peace was proclaimed in London on December 18, 1898. I reported to Cardinal Rampolla what had been done, and transmitted to the Holy See the report of the St. James's Hall Conference, and the prospectus of *War against War*, again soliciting the approval of the Pope.'

### THE RESPONSE OF THE HOLY SEE

In response to this appeal I had the honour to receive from the Cardinal Secretary of State an autograph letter, of which the following is a translation:

### 'LETTER FROM CARDINAL RAMPOLLA. TRANSLATION

'The Crusade in favour of Peace which you are carrying on is certainly worthy of all praise, for Conservation of Peace is the highest aim to which humanity can aspire.

'There can, therefore, be no doubt that the Holy See, in accordance with its ancient traditions, has no better wish than to see all nations fraternally united by the bonds of Peace, and to see the dominion of justice re-established over international relations. Towards this aim you are effectively co-operating. Meanwhile, every man of honest mind and every true lover of progress cannot but formulate the ardent wish that our Century, which has been so prolific in the multiplication and improvement of weapons of war, should at its close bequeath some noble memorial of itself which may earn for it the gratitude of humanity, by discovering a method by which, in the inevitable conflicts of nations, the voice of reason may make itself most easily heard.

'With this wish, pray accept the expression of my special regard.

'M. CARDINAL RAMPOLLA.'

'Rome,

'*January* 12.

## VI

### STEAD'S PEACE CRUSADE

Returned to London, Stead began at once to set on foot an International Peace Crusade. This new movement may be said to have been definitely launched at a great public meeting held on December 10 at the St. James's Hall. Stead himself scored the oratorical success of the evening. 'Your speech was as impressive as any I ever read,' Mr. Bryce, who was prevented from attending, wrote to him next day, 'and the Tsar's words as you gave them ought to sink deep into all hearts.' Mr. Balfour was among those present and a weighty letter from Mr. John Morley, dated December 17, shows how strongly he, also, sympathized with the demonstrators.

'There has been a great show lately of strengthening the hands of the British Government,' wrote Morley, 'in quarters where the clouds of war hover. It is time that something should be done to strengthen their hands in resolute and zealous co-operation with other rulers and statesmen in the ever-blessed cause of peace. Never was the moment more opportune for rousing the judgment and feelings of civilized men against those competitive and ever-swelling armaments which load the taxpayer, dislocate industry, waste capital, and in Continental Europe scourge the family and the home. Economic policy commands reduction, for militarism impoverishes States. Social order commands it, for militarism, in swallowing up resources that ought to go to the elevation and contentment of the people, engenders the whole dark progeny of Continental anarchism. Humanity commands it.

'These things are well known to all the rulers and nations of the world. They stand numbed. What is wanted is will to act upon the knowledge and statesmanship to find a better way. I expect your meeting will effectively stir the minds and hearts of multitudes of our countrymen in the loftiest of all human causes.'

A Provisional Committee was constituted to organize the campaign, and offices were taken in Arundel Street, Strand. A million copies of a broadsheet explaining the objects of the movement having been distributed, efforts were made to enlist the goodwill of the whole English Press. The next step was the founding by Stead of his new weekly journal, *War against War*. It was a very 'live' 16-page pro-

duction, similar in *format* to the *Westminster Gazette* of those days. Here is Stead's 'Appeal for Volunteers' in its second issue – these few lines will suffice to show the spirit in which the paper was edited:

'We want a million Volunteers for this Crusade. One million persons who will seriously, earnestly, and resolutely determine to do what in them lies to use the present moment for dealing a great stroke at a giant wrong. There are nearly forty millions of subjects of Her Majesty in these islands. Out of every forty can we not recruit one as a volunteer in the service of Peace?

'The Tsar of Russia, and all the crowned heads of the Continent, may wish for Peace, may desire to arrest the growth of their armaments, but they will be as powerless to achieve this end as to make roses bloom on icebergs until the nations of Europe, beginning with our own, feel and express a sincere desire to be delivered from this incubus of the Armed Peace – that baleful shadow of ever-impending War.

'The Sovereigns may propose, but it is their subjects who dispose. The Rescript of the Autocrat is mere waste-paper unless countersigned by the Democracy. Herein lies the real, veritable, palpable, terrible Sovereignty of the People.

'To that Sovereign People we now appeal for the exercise of their sovereignty in the cause of Peace. And to you, Reader, whose eyes may idly wander over these printed lines, the appeal is made as personally, and as directly, as if the whole paper were written for you alone. Will you Volunteer now?'

Among the hundreds of messages of sympathy and support which poured in at once from men and women of mark, few can have pleased Stead more than those from his friends General Booth and Earl Grey. 'Will gladly join your Peace Crusade, enlist as a volunteer and accept offered seat on General Committee,' Grey telegraphed. General Booth's reply was as follows:

'The Salvation Army is in deep sympathy with the noble, beneficent, and Christ-like proposals of the Tsar of Russia, believing in the sincerity of his motives and the practicability of his plans, and by God's help we shall not be found wanting in the conflict on behalf of righteousness and Peace among the nations.'

Some of the letters which Stead received enable us to realize his difficulties. Two very different poets were among the many serious-minded men who conscientiously held aloof. Mr. Kipling placed his faith in the discovery of some new engine of death so devastating that war must end and peace 'arrive by herself.' Mr. William Watson[1] could not sympathize with a war against wars.

'I hate the idea of war (he wrote) as waged for mere dynastic or other more or less disguised personal interests; or as inspired by the race hatreds or other animal instincts which keep men on a level not much above wolves or tigers; or as dictated by desire of national revenge or any such paltry motive; or as the expression of any of the things called "patriotism" – that pseudo-sacred word for almost every anti-human crime. But I hold with the most spiritual of all modern poets that there are times when –

> 'God's most perfect instrument,
> For working out a pure intent
> Is man arrayed for mutual slaughter:
> Yea, Carnage is His daughter.'

'I hold, for instance, that the Turk should be erased out of existence as a Power having dominion over peoples foreign to himself; and if this erasure can only be effected by act of war, then I am for act of war. So was Gladstone; and as you wield a great influence in the country, mostly I believe for good, I was sorry to see a while ago that you were against him in his proposals for destroying a loathsome tyranny. Your Tsar seems sincere in his so-called Disarmament proposals, yet my confidence in him is shaken by the recollection that he saw all those atrocities being perpetrated at his doors[2] and never lifted a finger (which was all he needed have done) to stay the horror. It seems to me that what we want is not so much to stir people up against war *qua* war as to teach them that although war has mostly been made to serve ignoble or contemptible ends it is yet sometimes capable of striking a blow for the Progress of the World such as in the present imperfect stage of social development can by nothing else be struck.

'Pray do not mistake this for an unfriendly letter, which, in intention

[1] Now Sir William Watson.
[2] The Armenian massacres of 1896.

at all events, it certainly is not. The manifold activities which your passion for human weal impel you to engage in have in the majority of cases my hearty sympathy and admiration.'

Lord Wolseley and John Burns were among those who were checked in their sympathy with Stead's aims by distrust of the Russians. 'May all your righteous hopes be realized,' wrote Wolseley, 'and if you can succeed in inducing the Tsar of Russia to disband his enormous army and give up augmenting his fleet, you will have earned the sincere thanks of every Christian man and woman in the world. He stands in need of no army or navy, for no one threatens his frontiers or wants anything he possesses.'

Mr. Burns was 'all for disarmament, but let the Autocrat begin!'

It is, of course, quite impossible to follow in any detail here the course of the Crusade. The reader will have no difficulty in picturing Stead as prime-mover in it, now in the midst of his helpers at the Arundel Street offices, now rushing north, south, east and west (at an average, in some weeks, of about 200 miles a day), to address the innumerable 'Towns' Meetings' which were convened to every part of the country. 'You, at least, *payez de personne* in your work for peace,' a friend wrote to him later. 'Twice across Europe and up and down England in six months is not a bad record for a man who is not a mere Queen's Messenger but a hard-working and over-worked journalistic apostle.'[1]

The movement came in for much criticism and ridicule, of course. Stead's methods, then as at other times, were unpalatable in half a dozen ways to the great bulk of his countrymen. Jingoes were angry because they were in a mood to give a good thrashing to either France or Russia. The average man was incensed by praise of Russia at the expense of England. The conventionally religious were shocked by daring applications of Holy Writ. Superior persons winced at Stead's 'vulgarity.' Excited Russians and their English allies resented the sight of a so-called Liberal 'backing up the Tsar.' If space allowed, one could transcribe here many noteworthy examples of the mockery and abuse to which he was subjected by fastidious wits and incensed opponents. I shall give one, partly as a typical illustration, partly as a testimony to the really extraordinary success which crowned Stead's efforts. In October, 1898, before the Crusade had started, the tone

[1] Mr. Wickham Steed, *The Times* correspondent in Rome.

of English comment had been, we must remember, ironical and contemptuous. Writing in the *Fortnightly Review* for April 1899, Mr. M. V. Tchertkoff, a Russian domiciled in England, expresed himself as follows:

'Russia, with a savage Government corrupted to the very marrow of its bones, oppressing to the utmost the meek working people, and systematically trampling down any slightest shoots of independent thought and effort; Russia ruled by a lawless band of mercenary officials, screened behind the back of a dummy sovereign, who, bound hand and foot, occupies the falsest and most helpless position imaginable. What attitude might one reasonably expect so-called "enlightened" England to assume towards this tyrant, often well-meaning I admit, but so utterly deceived and so full of illusions? . . .

'England finds nothing better to do than to express, in the most extravagant terms, its enthusiastic admiration of him, on account of a few words uttered, in his name, in favour of peace; words which have long become commonplace in the speeches of all the crowned representatives of the most warlike Powers. These stereotyped phrases, in this instance grouped together in a slightly new combination, which for some reason has particularly taken the fancy of the public, express the proposal of an utterly impracticable plan for the attainment of more peaceful international relations – a plan which only serves to illustrate its author's entire ignorance of actual life, and of the real causes that lead to war. This insignificant incident has, nevertheless, given an impetus to one of those unrestrainable and infectious crazes which periodically take possession of the idle classes, assuming the most varied forms, such as the bulb mania in Holland of former times, down to the Franco-Russian frenzy of a few years ago. In this particular case the paroxysm has found its issue in unlimited ecstasy over the proposal and the person of the Russian Emperor, and in the repetition, to all tunes, of the error that universal peace may be promoted by a few eloquent words, prettily expressed by a sympathetic monarch, independently of a radical revolution in men's relations to life and to one another.'

Having thus vented his feelings in regard to the Peace Crusade, M. Tchertkoff proceeded to deal with its originator:

'An English journalist, conspicuous for his ability in falling in with

the public mood of the moment, who has apparently made the glorification of crowned heads his speciality, and who lately, on the occasion of her jubilee, extolled the Queen in terms so exaggerated that they would have been regarded as indecent even by Russian Conservatives in relation to their sovereign – this English journalist rushed off to Russia, calling on the way on all the kings and presidents who consented to receive him. Having obtained an interview with the Russian Emperor, he hurried back to England, and through the Press, and at large public meetings, informed his countrymen that the Tsar, notwithstanding his sublime mission as the greatest Autocrat in the world, having deigned to accept the humble form of a human being, speaks, moves, and even smiles exactly like a mere man; yet that at the same time he has conserved in all its purity the ideal nobleness, the unfathomable intellect, and unattainable virtue inherent in a being from a higher world. . .

'And thus, in the person of its official head, one of the most demoralized and vicious governments in the world receives from without that moral, or rather immoral, support of which it has long been deprived amongst all enlightened Russians. . . .

'Such are some of the considerations that uphold me in my conviction that the present brilliant peace demonstration, far from attaining any good result, will, on the contrary, be productive of great harm, not only to the person of the Tsar, and to Russia in particular, but also to the cause of peace in general and to the welfare of all humanity, by postponing, for a more or less prolonged period, the definite recognition by mankind of the truth, now ripening in their consciousness, of the absolute and unconditional unlawfulness of military service.'

## VII

### AT THE HAGUE. STEAD'S LETTERS TO THE TSAR

'No dramatist could have devised a more picturesque and striking conclusion to our progressive nineteenth century than the coming conference initiated by the Tsar of All the Russias. Armed to the teeth with all the most destructive appliances that modern science could invent, the nations of the world are about to discuss the means of arriving at a universal and lasting peace! The House in the Wood, which Her Majesty has placed at their disposal for the Conference,

seems expressly made for the purpose. The large "Orange Hall," with its magnificent paintings commemorating the Peace of Munster, will be the theatre of the debates. Under the eye of Pallas Athene the delegates will frame their resolutions, while the inspiring device is held up before them, "Ultimus ante omnes de parta pace triumphus." '[1] – Mrs. Lecky in the *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1899.

Those weeks at The Hague were among the happiest and most successful in Stead's whole life. A new and brighter epoch had been opened in the world's history, he felt, and he was conscious of being one of the few who had made this possible. But if he sometimes shocked and startled the slower-going diplomatists he gave himself no airs of importance in the little Dutch city and we may be certain he laughed approvingly when, in Mr. G. H. Perris's *History of the Peace Conference*, issued some months later, he read these philosophic words written by his old friend and fellow-worker, Felix Moscheles. Mr. Moscheles has alluded to the presence at The Hague of some of the oldest workers in the Peace Movement:

'It is characteristic of the unselfish nature of these well-intentioned, but soft-headed, people, that they are in no way aggrieved at being overshadowed and superseded by the high and mighty council which is taking the work out of their hands. Speaking as one of the soft ones, I can only say that Emperors and statesmen are quite welcome to make free with anything and everything we may have been able to prepare for them and that we are happy to hand over our responsibilities to the master minds who are taking our places.'

'Matters had come to such a pass, Mr. Moscheles went on to remark in his whimsical way, that "more than once" he had found himself actually treated with respect!

Stead, for his part, had to have recourse to a bold move in order to win for the Press in general the respect he considered its due from that 'high and mighty Council' at which Mr. Moscheles poked his fun. The Conference, he found to his indignation, was to hold its sittings in private and its members were pledged to secrecy. Most of the other newspaper correspondents took umbrage – and flight! Stead was not to be foiled, however. Having first established very close relations with several of the delegates – more especially with the

[1] 'The greatest Victory is that by which Peace is won.'

Servian, M. Mijatovitch – and having convinced them that publicity was absolutely essential to the success of the meeting, he arranged to compile for the Dutch newspaper, *Dagblad*, a regular chronicle, translated into both Dutch and French, of all the proceedings in the House in the Wood. The controllers of the Conference were, of course, astonished and scandalized, and there was a disposition to try to make Stead's plan impossible, but wiser councils prevailed. 'Only those who have seen Mr. Stead's *Dagblad* "chronique" regularly and on the spot,' wrote Mr. Perris, 'can appreciate the influence it exerted on the Conference. The Delegates could not help reading it, and, feeling the eyes of King Demos upon them and his voice in their ears, could not help being influenced. The capture of the leading paper of the little city was at once the simplest and the most far-reaching of all its author's propagandist efforts. The general public have not heard of it . . . but this broadsheet, addressed simply to the delegates and the special correspondents (many of whom were largely dependent upon it), was the stroke of genius. By the force of its novelty, boldness, resource, and eloquence, it dominated the situation; and we shall never know how much of the result we owe to Mr. Stead.'

Serious students of the subject will find the story of this first Peace Conference fully recorded in various books available in any big Reference Library, and there are many pages on it in the *Review of Reviews* for the year of 1899. Of much greater interest for us, however, are a series of weekly letters which Stead addressed from The Hague to Nicholas II. These letters constitute, doubtless, the only instance in history of an Englishman acting as 'special correspondent' and political adviser to a Tsar of Russia.

They are full of trivial details of no interest in themselves but combining to make the whole series one of the most curious in the history of letter-writing.

Typewritten copies remain of all of them except the first.

I shall give the first epistle *verbatim*. All begin in the same way with the quaint formula, 'As in duty bound.'

Stead had arrived at The Hague on May 17 and had taken up his residence at a little villa known as 'Pax Intrantibus' on the outskirts of the town. He had made the acquaintance of all the leading delegates and had been busy compiling a 'Who's Who' of the Conference. Nothing of importance had occurred during the first few days:

*Second Letter.*

*May* 28, 1899.

As in duty bound, I resume my pen.

'This week I have the best of news to report. Would that you had been at The Hague to see the gradual unfoldment of your great design. Here be great diplomatists, experienced statesmen, famous admirals and valiant soldiers, all harnessed to the plough, and each one feels that it will be an ugly blot on his own record if the furrow is not driven straight and true. The amour-propre of the old men who are hoping to crown a long career by a great achievement in the cause of international peace, and the ambition of the young men who count upon using the success of the Conference as the starting-point of their ascent to high places, are working mightily for the realization of the peace ideal. Add to these, the fact that delegates are beginning to know each other better, to understand the essential sympathy that unites them, and you have sufficient explanation of the improvement that has taken place in the tone and temper of the Conference. But there are other reasons. Among these I put foremost the fact that M. de Staal has been able to escape from the *corvée* of tiresome ceremonial visits of etiquette and to bring his great personal influence directly to bear on the leading members of the Conference. We all love M. de Staal and it has been a real grief to all of us that he should have suffered so severely from toothache the last few days. He obtained some relief on Friday, but yesterday he was again at the dentist's. Madame and Mdlle Staal have now arrived, which may also be counted as a distinct gain. Another element which has helped has been the complete breakdown of the attempt to preserve secrecy as to the proceedings of the Conference. The publication of M. de Staal's speech was delayed for some days to everyone's disadvantage, but since then we have had less difficulty in obtaining news. I had in my possession at five o'clock on Friday all the essential facts concerning the great sitting at which your Arbitration proposals were brought forward, and published them in a long dispatch of two and a half columns in the *Manchester Guardian*, a paper to which I am sending correspondence, as it was the best paper in England to support the peace crusade. Yet immediately before I sent off my telegram, when I asked M. de Staal for information, he said he could not possibly give me any, as the proceedings were strictly secret! It was very amusing, but all's well that ends well, and in future I hope we shall have better arrangements.

'Everyone with whom I have spoken, especially the English and American delegates, professes to be delighted with the Russian proposals. Sir Julian Pauncefote was loud in the praise of Mr. Martens' handiwork, and said that he thought it would require but very slight and immaterial alterations to make the whole scheme acceptable to everybody. He and the Americans are very strong in support of a permanent international tribunal, and I am glad for the sake of my country that the curious way in which the Russian proposals were presented enabled the British delegates to be the first to propose the establishment of a permanent international tribunal. Russia has so many glories to boast of in these initiatives of peace that I hope you will not grudge England her one solitary laurel leaf.

'I had a very interesting conversation with Mr. Holls, the most powerful and active of the American delegates here. He said that being an American who was free from European prejudices he had been both startled and pained to find how general and deep-seated was the distrust of Russia. This universal distrust, he said, was the chief obstacle in the way of the success of the Conference. I said that its origin was not difficult to trace in the propaganda of hatred which had been kept up for generations by interested parties, but that no one could doubt that its existence was most baneful. Therefore I said, "Will you help me in dispelling it, and let us share the task in this way? Wherever and whenever you come upon anything, be it rumour, fact or act, which appears to you to justify this distrust of Russia, will you bring it to me, and I will undertake to ascertain, in every case, what is the truth, and I hope also to dispel distrust." He said he would, and by way of a beginning he said that the Americans were bitterly aggrieved because of the despotic way in which the Russians were bossing the Conference. They felt that the Tsar was "running this show," and that no one but a Russian was allowed even to have an opinion as to what was the true interpretation of Muravieff's circular. This was due to the strong opinion expressed by Mr. Martens that the question of private property in naval warfare lay outside the scope of the Conference. I am glad to be able to say that I was able yesterday completely to reassure Mr. Holls on this point, by the assurances of M. de Staal and Mr. Martens, reinforced by the strong expressions of Sir Julian Pauncefote. . . . So that is a good beginning.

'And here may I interpolate a remark that no echoes of the angry snarling of the *Times* concerning the Pekin railway concession disturb the tranquillity of our leafy shades. I read with sincere shame what the *Times* prints. The agreement was perfectly clear. North of the Great Wall to you, the basin of the Yang-tse-Kiang to us. All between to be a happy hunting ground for the concessionaires of both nations. I do not know how far Lord Salisbury has stooped to echo the outcry of the *Times*, but if he were to make any objection, I should be strongly tempted to say with all good nature, but with unmistakable clearness, that if in addition to conceding the basin of the Yang-tse-Kiang to English concessionaires you were also expected by the English Government to extend the basin of the Yang-tse-Kiang to the North Wall of China, the agreement would become impossible, as it was concluded on the assumption that geographical facts could not be manipulated to suit the convenience of English policy. But I hope Lord Salisbury will have more sense than to expose himself to so obvious a retort, if only because, in the relations of Empires it is never well to be exposed to the temptation to score too heavily over your opponent. Patience and good humour will solve more difficulties than severe retorts and triumphant refutation.

'Lord Aberdeen has spent some days at The Hague. He was exceedingly pleased to hear my report of my visit to Tsarkoe Selo and he left full of renewed hope. He is one of the kindliest and the best of men. I was very glad to hear that Madame Selenka had received your kind reply to her telegram. She has had her interview with Madame de Staal and is extremely happy.'

'Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, one of the French delegates, told me that he had never attended a congress that was more human and less diplomatic, all the members being seriously concerned about attaining some real good for all mankind.

'I propose on Saturday next to begin publishing daily in the *Dagblad* two columns in French on the Conference, news and comments, copies of which will be forwarded daily to Tsarskoë.

'Last week the Queen came and charmed everyone. Our Queen celebrated her eightieth birthday. And your Empress – how many times our thoughts have turned to her in love and gratitude. May God bless you both.'

From subsequent letters I shall give extracts merely – passages

particularly characteristic of Stead and illustrative of the frankness and naturalness with which he talked to the Tsar. Incidentally we shall learn from them as much of the proceedings and achievements of the Conferences as we need to know.

*Third Letter.*

As in duty bound, *June* 4.

'I resume my weekly chronicle of the doings of The Hague. It is glorious weather and most of the delegates have gone to Haarlem on a special excursion. M. de Staal has not gone for I met him and Madame de Staal at lunch. "These things" he said, "are for younger people." But the President is young at heart, and was quite annoyed when his barber whom he asked to guess his age answered " eighty, possibly more." He tells me that all goes well, and that there is no menacing development visible either in Germany or elsewhere.

. . . . . .

'The good work goes well. I ran over to London the other day to put the Review to press, and saw Arthur Balfour. He was very pleased to hear that there was a prospect of your visiting England this year. Should you be able to carry out that intention, I sincerely hope that sometime during your sojourn, you may make an opportunity for meeting Mr. Balfour. He is not only leader of the House of Commons, nephew of Lord Salisbury, and future Prime Minister, but he is one of the best men in the world, the strongest friend the Cabinet has towards the Peace Conference, and one in whose sincerity and goodness you can completely trust. Such men are rare. But they exist, and I can wish you nothing better than that they should all be your personal friends. I reported to him at length concerning the Conference, and he is very pleased to be quite confident that this time something practical is going to be done.'

*Fourth Letter.*

*June* 11.

'The Bishop of Hereford preached an eloquent sermon to-day in the English Church on the Conference, which, he said, was not as Mommsen had said a misprint of the book of history, but rather the Golden Title of a new page in a chapter of history infinitely brighter than any that had yet been written. He spoke very warmly about the immense service you had rendered to humanity by summoning the Conference which he hoped would enthrone the international conscience as sovereign among the children of men.'

*Fifth Letter.*

*June* 18.

'The chief topic all this week has been the attitude of the German Emperor – a subject upon which you are probably much better informed at St. Petersburg than we are at The Hague. On Friday it is said a courier arrived for Count Münster, but we have as yet only contradictory rumours, as to his new instructions. The story most positively repeated declares that the Kaiser objects to the obligatory clauses in the Arbitration project, regarding it as derogatory to his Divine Right to submit the adjudication of any question to arbitration other than that of the God of Battles. This morning on leaving church an American told me that a German delegate had said that they, the Germans, did not trust the Russians, and would have nothing to do with their Arbitrations. The facts which are notorious are that Count Welserheim, the Austrian, is doing everything he can to induce the Kaiser not to take any action which would expose the hollowness of the Triple Alliance. Italy cannot oppose arbitration. The American delegates who are closely connected with the Germans are doing their best to convince the Kaiser that Germany would be execrated throughout the world if they were to cause the Arbitration proposal to fail. Further, a great emphasis has been laid upon the fact that any failure on the part of the Conference would immensely increase the strength of the forces of revolutionary Socialism. Jaurés, the French Socialist leader, said to d'Estournelles, when he left Paris: "You are going to The Hague. Do your best; you will fail. Not until you have tried and failed will our opportunity come." On the part of the British delegates, the attitude is one of indifference to what Germany may do or not do. We are now numerous enough and strong enough to establish a system of Arbitration by ourselves. If Germany chooses to stand out, that is her affair. Germany is not the Dictator of the Universe.

. . . . . .

'I am sorely grieved at the nature of the news which reaches us from Southern Russia. The failure of the crops with the prospect of severe famine is appalling. But out of evil good may come. The necessity for making a great state campaign against the famine, after the example of our Indian Famine Relief Department, may give you power and grace sufficient to face the risk and difficulty of a bold initiative in the diversion of funds from military and naval expenditure to the work of relief.

'If you have not recently read of the work of famine relief in India, you might find some of the recent books well worth your attention.

'May God give you grace and wisdom to discern His will in this and in all other matters.

'With gratitude and affection to you and the Empress.'

*Sixth Letter.*

*June* 25.

'Nothing will be done about the standstill of armaments at the Conference. All that anyone hopes for is that the proposal may be accepted in principle, and an earnest hope expressed that by subsequent communications between the Great Powers an agreement may be arrived at. This will leave the door open for agitation and propaganda after the Conference has closed. The small Powers are *de trop* in such a discussion. The Dual, the Triple, the Anglo-American, and the Japanese alone count in such matters. And if the standstill proposal is to be taken seriously, it will have to be dealt with by these eight Powers.

'I had a conference here the other night. Very good meeting. You will find it fully reported in the *Dagblad*. At the close questions were asked about Finland and Transvaal. It is astonishing what prejudice has been created against Russia by the Ukase about Finland. In Holland and Belgium the Finnish question seems to have blotted out with numbers of people all sense of the wider question. Russia to them is not the Peace Conference maker, but solely the despoiler of the liberty of Finland.'[1]

*Seventh Letter.*

*July* 2.

'We have all heard with profound thankfulness that the Empress has safely passed through the ordeal which brings near to the portals of Death all who are privileged to bring a new soul into the land of the living. This morning when I attended with my wife the thanksgiving service in the Russian Church here, I noticed that of the twenty sacred pictures exhibited on the walls about twelve illustrated the sacred divine relation of mother and child.

'We sincerely trust that both mother and child are doing well, and

[1] Stead was continually championing the Finns against Russian oppression. An 'open letter' which he wrote in 1902 to M. de Plehve calling attention to their grievances won him intense gratitude throughout Finland.

that the little girl may be so great a blessing to both of you that you will bless God and praise Him all your life long that He has given you once more a daughter instead of a son.

'Here at The Hague we are beginning to see the end of the labours of the Conference. The end – that is to say the beginning. For the glory of this Assembly is that it has begun a good work which will prosper more and more unto the perfect day.

'The standstill proposition has temporarily failed. The vote of Germany, expressed with unexpected vigour by Colonel Schwarzhoff, effectively thwarted any hope of realizing any practical results in this direction.

. . . . . .

'As to any immediate prospect of effecting any tangible reduction by cessation of the present competition in armaments, I am more than ever disposed to rely more upon a direct negotiation between Russia and England than upon anything else. I have discussed this matter at length with the British naval delegate, Admiral Fisher, who is entirely in accord with me in this matter. What we hope for is that when you come to England in the Autumn you may be able in personal conversation with Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen to arrive at a general understanding as to the stabilization of the present naval strength of Russia and England. Of course other Powers will have to be taken into account, but the first step is to avert the competition between Russia and England. Mr. Goschen is well posted on the question, and if you could see him when you come I think something practical might be done.

'The Arbitration scheme progresses steadily. At Saturday's meeting the Comité d'Examen was much pleased to find that Germany was willing to co-operate in establishing a permanent *Court* of International Arbitration on condition that it was not called a permanent *Tribunal.*

. . . . . .

'I met Count Münster at M. de Staal's brilliant party last night. The whole Conference he said "is a farce." I replied: "It is very wicked to say so. And you would not say so if you had not outgrown all your hopes and aspirations." But I have been getting into the black books of the Germans of late. Both M. de Staal and M. Basili have begged me not to write as I have been doing in the *Dagblad* on Germany's conduct. Zorn, to whom I also spoke on Saturday night,

was very hot about my articles. They chiefly resent my saying that Colonel Schwarzhoff had not the courage of his opinions, an innocent phrase surely. But they take it as a personal insult, and if we had been in Germany no one knows what might have happened.

. . . . . .

'Madame de Staal's party on Saturday night was a brilliant success. I am no judge in such matters, as it was the first ball which I ever attended. I have written my impressions in Monday's *Dagblad* which may possibly amuse you. It is not often that a man lives to be fifty before being present at a ball.'

*Eighth Letter.*

*July* 9.

'There are various foolish stories current in the Press about your being dissatisfied with the work of the Conference, which I take leave entirely to disbelieve. Other foolish newspapers describe me as the enemy of Russia disguised as a friend. If so the disguise is so thick that I have never penetrated it myself.'

*Ninth Letter.*

*July* 16.

'I begin my ninth letter with an expression of sincere sympathy. Death levels all distinctions of caste or of class, and before the open grave Emperor and serfs are the same. I read with deep feeling the touching and simple words in which you announced your brother's death, words which reminded all who, like you, have mourned such a loss, of the unity of our common humanity.

'But we sorrow not as those who are without hope. I am taking the liberty of forwarding you this week in addition to the file of the *Dagblad*, which I have posted you regularly and which I hope you have received in due course, a copy of a little book which under the circumstances, I venture to think you will read with peculiar interest.[1]

. . . . . .

'Yang Yu, the Chinese delegate, has at last expressed an opinion, and a grimly humorous one it is. He proposes to add to the Article on Mediation, which ends by declaring that the offer of mediation shall not be regarded as an act "peu amical" the further proviso that

[1] *Letters from Julia.* Stead proceeds to give the Tsar an outline of his psychic experiences.

Mediation shall neither be held to justify the mediating Powers in making excessive demands for compensation for their services. Poor Yang Yu ruefully remembers the price China had to pay for the mediation of Russia, Germany and France at the close of the Japanese War.

'His amendment will not be proposed, but it is much talked of. I am busy preparing a book which will give an account of the work of the Conference. It will be in French, and will contain the material of the "Parliament of Peace" and the protocols of the Conference and its commissions.

'D'Estournelles made an excellent speech in the Comité d'Examen which you will be glad to read. I enclose a copy.'

*Tenth Letter.*

*July* 23.

'The work of the Conference is now virtually finished. There but remains one full meeting more and then the signing of the Final Protocol and the Four Conventions.

'It is a record of work of which you may well be proud and grateful, inasmuch as, but for your initiative, nothing would have been done. Let us glance at the harvest that has been reaped.

'(1) Unanimous declaration by representatives of all Governments of the world that arrest of increase in armaments is to be desired for the moral and material welfare of humanity. Question therefore remitted to each Government how best to effect this much-to-be-desired object.

'(2) Convention No. 1 forbidding (i) use of balloons to drop explosives from the sky to injure combatants on earth; (ii) forbidding the use of asphyxiating shells; and (iii) forbidding use of bullets which expand or flatten. Convention signed by all Powers, England and America making reserves on last two points.

'(3) Convention No. 2 applying provisions of Geneva Red Cross Society to Naval Warfare. This was recommended in 1868, but never carried out until to-day.

'(4) Convention No. 3 embodying the perfected code of Rules of War based upon the Brussels rules. Russia pressed for this in 1874, but never succeeded in carrying it out until now.

'(5) Convention No. 4 on Mediation and Arbitration, the greatest achievement of the Conference. It consists of precise and clear

arrangements for (i) good offices and mediation when desired by disputants; (ii) the acceptance of obligation to offer mediation when it is not sought; (iii) special mediation by which neutral powers become charged with duty of mediation as the second of the belligerents; (iv) the appointment of International Commissions d'Enquete for clearing up disputed questions by local investigation; (v) the establishment of a permanent Court of Arbitration with Permanent Bureau at The Hague; (vi) the acceptance by all Governments of the duty of representing to Governments in dispute the importance of referring their quarrel to the Court; and (vii) the elaboration of a complete code of Arbitration procedure.

'(6) The Powers "se reservant de conclure" new treaties extending obligatory arbitration to all cases which they deem it suitable.

'(7) Definite resolutions have been passed declaring that new Conferences should be held on the following subjects: (i) the revision of the Geneva Convention, (ii) the Rights and Duties of Neutrals, (iii) the Right of Capture of Private Property at sea, and (iv) the question of bombarding coast towns.

'Such are some of the gains garnered for humanity as the direct result of the beneficent initiative of the Rescript. What a conclusive answer is this to all those fears and misgivings which filled the air all last autumn.

'The indirect results have been hardly less important. The Conference has brought together men of all nations from the uttermost ends of the earth, and set them to work together to devise methods to promote peace and to humanize war. Never before have men of such diverse nationalities been brought into such close companionship for so noble an end, and never have the members of any Conference been so fraternal, so friendly and so heartily at one among themselves. The Conference itself as a fact in the evolution of human society is greater than all its works.

. . . . . .

'There are three questions upon which I hope you will already have been thinking.

'(1) What can Russia do to extend still further the scope of (Art. 18) obligatory arbitration? I have suggested for England that we should propose to every Power that is in favour of obligatory arbitration on certain subjects to conclude a direct treaty binding both to refer such subjects to arbitration. But why should not you who have taken such

a lead so far not keep the lead by yourself proposing such treaties to all the states with whom Russia is in relation?

'(2) What can Russia do to make known to all the world the real and immense work done by the Conference? An official *communiqué* in the Official Messenger summarizing the harvest that has been gathered would be telegraphed to every paper in the world. By no other means can so authoritative a declaration be so widely diffused.

'(3) What should be done in the way of publishing and circulating a proper narrative of the proceedings of the Conference? I hope next month to have ready to issue a *chronique* of the Conference in French. It will be published at The Hague at about 3 francs 50 c. But a latter edition ought to appear for public libraries and for the delegates. If you have any ideas on this subject, I shall be much obliged if you would communicate them to me. If an edition de luxe is brought out would any considerable number be wanted in Russia?'

*Last Letter from The Hague.*

*August* 1.

'The Conference is over. I was present at the final sitting, and now it is my pleasant duty to write you my last letter on the result of the Conference at The Hague. No, not the last letter on its results, not by a long, long way. For the results of the Conference will affect all future history and will constantly and continuously influence my life. But after this letter my *chronique* from week to week ends.

'First and foremost, let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to Almighty God who put it into your heart to do that seed sowing work for Him, which has already borne such excellent fruit. To Him, the Lord of Peace and Giver of all good things and thoughts which are good things in the making, let us ascribe all praise for His wonderful loving-kindness towards us all in this Conference.

'Secondly, let me give you the watchword which your excellent Minister, M. Basili, has given to me as the word which more than anything else expressed the spirit in which we all should regard the Conference and its work. He asked me what I would suggest. I answered "Hope." "No," he replied, "Hope is good but Hope is not good enough. The true word is Confiance! Confiance in the work of the Conference. Confiance in the future, above all Confiance en Dieu." It is a good word. Better than our English confidence, or than our English faith. In English I suppose we should translate it confident faith or strong trust.

'Grateful praise for the work accomplished in the past; *Confiance* in the work which is about to be achieved in the future; these two sentiments, better than anything else, express what we all more or less feel at The Hague.

'What the people feel and hope outside is expressed better than I can express it in the printed copy of verses which I inserted in the *Dagblad*. The authoress is a girl of about nineteen, consumptive, very poor, who is helping to maintain her family by working as a telephone girl in the North of England. I enclose the verses not merely because of their merit, which I venture to think is considerable, but in order to give you an apt illustration of how the light shines far down into the buried strata of humanity and kindles fresh hope in the hearts of the people.

'I am sorry that M. de Staal and M. Basili could not have been packed off to Russia immediately the Conference was over to report personally to you when they are flushed with the first glow of the golden glory of success which has been achieved at The Hague. M. de Staal looks ten years younger and laughs and sings like a merry-hearted boy. And well he may. For if ever man had good justification to rejoice and be merry it is M. de Staal. As for M. Basili he was in these last days almost transfigured with joy and confidence. And what these two were, so were we all, more or less. Even Count Münster abated somewhat of his snarling cynicism. It was a sight not to be seen often in a century, this assemblage of grey-headed diplomats who came believing that they could do nothing, and who have dispersed feeling that they have done a very great deal indeed. And the best of it all is that instead of regarding what they have done as an end, they all declare it is only a beginning of better things to come. ' "So, forgetting those things that are passed, let us reach forward to those which are to come." What is to be done next?

. . . . . .

'I will close this last letter from The Hague, as I began it, by expressing once more my humble and hearty thanks to our loving Father who having put this impulse in your heart, has prospered it in His own way better than we ever ventured to hope or dream.

'May He continue to impart to you and to your wife something of the joy and *confiance* which you have helped so mightily to diffuse throughout the world.'

# CHAPTER 24

## STEAD AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899–1902

'WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?'
'STOP THE WAR!'
'WHEN?'
'IMMEDIATELY.'
'WHY?'
'BECAUSE WE ARE IN THE WRONG!'
'HOW?'
'BY CONFESSING OUR SINS AND DOING RIGHT.'

'Such are the headings which appear every week in *War against War*, the little periodical which Mr. Stead has been editing since the month of October, and what a war it is! Sometimes sparkling with humour, full of go, but savage in its methods, fantastic in its strategy; not an official lie which escapes furious denial; not an inconsequential statement which is not underlined; not a fault which is not shown up. Everything may become a weapon, from Biblical texts to the most biting caricatures. And not only by writing, but by speaking, does Mr. Stead wage his war of protest and vociferation. From end to end of England he travels weariless.

'Reading the pages of his paper I have wondered whether this extraordinary man in seeking duty did not pass it by, whether in desiring honour he did not miss it. Is it allowable thus to treat one's own country when the blood of her sons is flowing far away even for a dubious cause? . . . Well, this impression does not last. I defy anyone who reads *War against War* to say that Mr. Stead does not love his country.'

BARON PIERRE DE COUBERTIN in *L'Indépendance Belge*,
*January* 24, 1900.

### I

### STEAD'S VIEW OF THE WAR

IT is strange to reflect – as Cecil Rhodes reflected so often – that three of the men most responsible for the war in South Africa were, in a sense, Stead's disciples: Rhodes himself, Milner and Edmund Garrett. Rhodes, in his big, simple-minded way was frankly bewildered by what seemed to him Stead's amazing per-

versity in the matter. Dr. Jameson seems to have regarded his case as pathological. 'Stead is mad sometimes, and in some measure,' he is reported to have declared,[1] 'and he is such a charming fellow that you can tell him so without his being offended or caring a jot. He loses the perspective of things and, not only that, he sees them with distorted vision. When it became a question of war in South Africa he couldn't judge the situation because he was fresh from the Peace Congress and was possessed – obsessed in fact – by the idea of Peace to such an extent that his judgment was perverted.'

That is the case against Stead as put by an affectionate friend. In the eyes of the bulk of the War Party he was, of course, a liar and a traitor; and the War Party constituted at least two-thirds, if not three-fourths, of the nation. 'It will be a hundred years,' an American admirer wrote at the time, 'before the English realize Stead's services to their country.' Two decades only have passed as yet, but already most people are able at least to discuss the matter without undue heat or acrimony.

Stead understood the war fever which he loathed and strove against, and he took very little notice – except in so far as they could be utilized in public controversy – of even the most violent attacks upon his good faith and character. He faced hostile audiences unflinchingly all over England. When a band of young village patriots smashed the windows and wicket-gate of his little house at Hayling Island, he invited the ringleaders to supper and lectured them good-humouredly over the coffee and ham-and-eggs.

I shall try to condense into the smallest possible amount of space Stead's share in the long and bitter controversy. Not many of his opponents had patience to listen to him, and his utterances were so numerous and copious that very few of his sympathizers, speaking from memory, would be able to describe precisely the line he took.

Here is a short passage from *The Truth about the War* (p. 54) in which he sums up his main contention:

'The Boers have their own sins to answer for. Nor do I for a moment pretend that their system of government is ideal or their administration pure. The Outlanders had plenty of grievances which it was our duty to try and redress so far as it was possible to do it without going to war, or without breaking our pledged word not to interfere

[1] In a conversation recorded by Mr. G. E. Startup.

in the internal affairs of the South African Republic. That may be admitted, and if anyone likes to throw hard words at President Kruger, and abuse him for not having the wit to see that he could have circumvented the war party by accepting the five years' franchise, I shall not say them nay. We have no responsibility for the mistakes and shortcomings of President Kruger. What we have to do is to ask whether our own policy has been free from reproach, whether we have acted throughout in a straightforward honourable manner, and whether we, being the superior and more civilized Power, have used every available means of allaying the very distrustful Old Peasant with whom we had to deal.'

Unfortunately, Stead proceeds to say, that was just what we had not done. It was true that in the House of Commons in May, 1896, Mr. Chamberlain had spoken as follows: 'To go to war with President Kruger in order to force upon him reforms in the internal affairs of his State, with which successive Secretaries of State standing in this place have repudiated all right of interference – that would have been a course of action as immoral as it would have been unwise'; and that in February, 1897, he had expressed himself in the same sense with equal precision, admitting that the British Government's rights of action were 'limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce'; but his actions had so belied these sentiments that President Kruger could not but feel convinced that the British Government was determined by hook or by crook to destroy the Transvaal Republic and reduce it to the status of a British Colony.

To understand Kruger's frame of mind, it was essential to go back to the Jameson Raid and to look at it and what preceded and followed it with Kruger's eyes. What did the old man see? He saw that before the Raid, in order to facilitate the armed intervention of British troops, Mr. Chamberlain had made over to Mr. Rhodes a strip of land convenient as a jumping-off place for an invasion of the Transvaal. 'He saw also that Mr. Chamberlain had expedited the arrangement by which the mounted police could be placed at the disposition of Dr. Jameson for use on emergencies. Finally, when the conspiracy hung fire among the Outlanders, he saw Dr. Jameson, at the head of the troops taken over from Mr. Chamberlain, use the jumping-off place as the base from which he invaded the Republic.'

These were things which Kruger saw for himself. In addition he would have heard:

1. That Dr. Jameson had communicated his intentions to Sir Graham Bower, who was virtually Acting High Commissioner at the Cape – if not also to the High Commissioner himself, Lord Rosmead, who was just then ill.

2. That Rhodes had been in very close and confidential communication with the Colonial Office for many weeks before the Raid.

3. That what were believed to be the most incriminating items of this correspondence were withheld from the South African Committee which was appointed by the House of Commons in 1897 to investigate the whole matter.

4. And that, finally, according to Mr. Chamberlain, the chief spokesman of the British Government, Cecil Rhodes, although Premier of Cape Colony when abetting the plan for the Outlanders' rebellion (though he was not in Jameson's confidence as to the inopportune Raid which so upset his apple-cart!), had acted throughout as a 'man of honour'!

Stead continues: 'All this Mr. Kruger knows. What possible conclusion could he draw from it except that in dealing with Mr. Chamberlain, he is dealing with a man who was privy to the conspiracy to overthrow his Government and annex the Transvaal and who did not hesitate at any amount of false statement and suppression of evidence in order to save his skin. Nay, it is even worse than this. For the proceedings of the Committee convinced him that both parties in England are willing to join in a conspiracy to conceal the truth whenever it suits the interest of England in South Africa to do so. As Lord George Hamilton ingenuously said when praising Sir W. Harcourt and the Liberal members of the Committee for hushing up the scandal: 'They behaved as Englishmen always behave in positions of responsibility. They declined to push the inquiry to a point which would endanger the supremacy of British rule in South Africa.'

That was the view held by most of our 'Island Pharisees.' The *Temps*, in an article upon Mr. Chamberlain's position, voiced the opinion which prevailed throughout the rest of the world:

'The Committee sacrifices everything, including the honour of England, to its desire to preserve the reputation of that meddlesome

and imperious statesman. The evil is wrought and irreparable. It is now proved that the Queen's Government has plotted in time of peace the invasion of a friendly country, and that there is no majority in Great Britain to condemn the crime. It is the apotheosis of the Birmingham statesman; it is also the abdication of the conscience of Great Britain.'

Quite inevitably this was the view taken also by the Boer Government; and when, in September 1899, British troops having been already moved forward along the Natal frontier of the Transvaal, Mr. Chamberlain refused to ratify the terms which he himself had originally proposed and which they, however reluctantly, had accepted, there could no longer be any doubt in Kruger's mind as to what had become inevitable.

Mr. Chamberlain's fine sentiments of 1896 and 1897 were now forgotten by the British Government. 'Do what we tell you or it will be worse for you! If you don't give in we shall send thousands and ever more thousands of soldiers to surround you, to throttle you and to compel you to submit!' That, says Stead, was now our policy. And when the Boers after first remonstrating in vain, at last declared that the dispatch of any more troops must be regarded as a declaration of war, behold! they had issued an 'ultimatum' and the British Empire was fighting in self-defence!

## II

### THE 'STOP THE WAR' CAMPAIGN

By the beginning of December 1899, the pro-Boers were left with only two London newspapers to express their views, the *Morning Leader* and the *Star*: Mr. H. W. Massingham, of the *Daily Chronicle*, and Mr. W. M. Crook, of the *Echo*, had been forced to resign their posts as editors, the proprietors of both journals vetoing any further opposition to the war. In the country, the *Manchester Guardian* continued to support the unpopular cause, its position being almost unassailable by reason of its service of commercial news, essential to the cotton trade. 'The morning trains and trams in Lancashire,' Mr. R. H. Gretton tells us, 'were full of men who expressed their attitude by crumpling the paper into a ball and throwing it away ostentatiously

when they had read the telegrams from New York, Galveston and New Orleans.'[1]

It was at this juncture that Stead took the initiative in forming the famous 'Stop the War Committee,' with Mr. Crook as one of his most stalwart supporters. 'I protested strongly against the name,' Mr. Crook writes me, 'as I considered it unnecessarily provocative and irritating, but Stead insisted that it was the name most descriptive of what we were out to accomplish and, as the majority of our associates agreed with him, I bowed to their decision. Stead was Treasurer and found most of the money for carrying out our operations. I believe he would have bankrupted himself but for Mr. Stout, his manager, who with friendly guile concealed from him some of the profits of the *Review of Reviews* (already beginning to dwindle) and banked them separately for the benefit of the Stead household!'

Only a few Members of Parliament cared to throw in their lot with so 'extreme' an institution as the Committee. Among them were Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Labouchere, Sir Wilfred Lawson, the Hon. Philip Stanhope (later Lord Weardale), Mr. Keir Hardie, and Mr. Cremer. All of these, and some of the Irish Nationalist Members as well, took active part in the agitation which followed. Scores of public meetings were organized throughout the country, and some of them may almost be called historic in view of the extraordinary scenes of violence they called forth. Mr. Crook was in the thick of the *melée* at a great meeting which was held at Exeter Hall, and it was with some difficulty that, with the help of Mrs. Sheldon Amos, a woman of strong muscles no less than of stout heart, he contrived to get Sir Wilfred Lawson, an easily recognized figure, safely out of the building. In the free fight which took place inside the Hall, a number of young Quakers were among the most gallant defenders of the platform, and notably Mr. Roger Clark, a grandson of John Bright.

At a subsequent meeting in the Queen's Hall, at which Stead and Dr. Clifford were among the principal speakers, the police were in strong force and kept at bay a huge howling mob outside. On this occasion some twelve hundred lusty young men from Battersea, described as 'John Burns's Lambs,' were engaged to act as 'stewards' in case their services should be wanted to protect the speakers and the audience. There were, of course, interruptions and signs of trouble, and it was no very easy matter to hold the said 'lambs'

[1] *A Modern History of the English People*, Vol. II.

in leash, but the meeting was held without any serious disorder.

Later a new channel for pro-Boer energies was suggested by an American friend of Stead's, Mr. John E. Milholland, like Stead himself a man of big ideas, a believer in peace through arbitration and a consistent champion of the oppressed. At his house in Kensington, already then and for many years afterwards 'a hot-bed of humanitarianism,' as a genial cynic once remarked, Mr. Milholland gave a dinner to start 'The Intervention Club' – the 'Tic' as it was called for short – for the purpose of promoting a movement very similar to that which is now embodied in the League of Nations. The time was not ripe for 'The Intervention Club,' but it served as a stepping-stone to a new institution which, with the help of Mr. Milholland, Mr. Crook, Mr. Hodgson Pratt and others, Stead now founded, 'The International Union.' Among other men and women of note whose support Stead obtained were Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, William Watson, the poet, Madame Sarah Grand, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mr. J. A. Hobson, Mr. H. W. Massingham, and Mr. Ernest Parke. 'The International Union' continued in existence until striving ceaselessly in its efforts to arouse the national conscience: with what success we must leave it to Posterity to say – contemporary historians make little or no account of it. Stead expounded its aims in the following words:

'We must resolutely face the fact that unless we bestir ourselves and set to work to create, each in our own locality, centres of resistance to the frenzy of the hour, there is nothing before us but a terrible looking forward to judgment to come. National bankruptcy and Imperial ruin will overtake us, and it will be in vain to pray to God to help us if we have not done all that we can to help ourselves. What is needed is the organization of all those in every constituency in the land who care for peace, progress and reform. An earnest secretary, who is in touch with a dozen men and women in all parts of the constituency who hate war as they hate the devil, and who are prepared to agitate, speak, work and vote for peace, with say 10 per cent. of the same zeal with which publicans fight for their licences or the Jingoes shout for bloodshed, would do more than anything else to restore sanity to the nation, and enable us to cast out this demon which, at the present moment, is hurrying us like the Gadarene swine down to the abyss.

'With this end in view, many of the leading peace-workers of the world have come together and formed an INTERNATIONAL UNION with the object of securing the co-operation of all men and women who are in earnest about peace. The Union does not seek to supersede the operations of any of the existing peace societies. It acknowledges them all and includes among its members representatives of the most important Peace Associations in England and the Continent; but it recognizes that Peace Associations by themselves are powerless. It is necessary to form a good working alliance with the Socialists, with the Independent Labour Party, and with such remnant of the Christians as have not apostasized from the faith of their Founder. It will not be content until in every constituency in the land there is a local centre which will charge itself, in the first instance, with compiling a muster-roll of all those citizens who are heart and soul in sympathy with this war against war. The propaganda for peace needs to be put upon a broad national and international foundation.

'I have undertaken to act as secretary for the British branch of the Union, and shall be very glad to forward to any reader on application particulars as to its organization and objects, together with suggestions as to how the work of organization can best be carried out. This is a practical suggestion which I throw out by way of personal appeal to everyone who reads this page. One thing is quite certain – bad times are coming upon us, and the resources with which we might have protected ourselves against the increasing pressure of foreign and American competition are being wasted in building block-houses on the veldt and furnishing material for Lord Kitchener's weekly "bag" of butchered Boers. Our only consolation is that when the time of tribulation comes there will also come a time of retribution, and that in the uprising of a betrayed people many institutions which are now regarded as bulwarks of our present social system will go by the board.'

* * *

The story of Stead's 'Stop the War' campaign is the story of a failure, as we all know, but it was a splendid failure. 'The bravest man in the British Empire is not in South Africa fighting the Boers,' wrote an American correspondent, Mr. Walter Wellman, in August 1901.[1] 'He is right here in London fighting English public opinion. Though wellnigh single-handed, though opposed by a nearly

[1] In the *Chicago Record Herald.*

unanimous Press and people, he has started a current of thought which bids fair to run wider and deeper before many weeks shall have passed. The Government is obviously worried. It would like to close this man's mouth, but does not dare.' As long as Mr. Stead abused the politicians and lampooned the generals, Mr. Wellman went on to say, as long as he confined himself to shouts that Britain was in the wrong and did not deserve to win, the authorities cared little about him –

'But now he is pointing out how to stop the war. He is telling the Government how it may get peace with honour. To-day the people barely listen. They will not heed or follow him. The war is no longer popular, but English tenacity bids holding on. Everyone is tired of the war, but as yet not actually disgusted. What the Ministers fear is that ere long that stage of disgust will be reached; that the people will say: "Stop the farce; we are tired of it; take Stead's way. We forgive him for abusing the soldiers – he has shown us the way to peace. Let us have peace at any cost!" '

'Peace at any cost' was never Stead's watchword, but he was preaching Peace with Apology – Peace with Restitution; and he preached in vain. Lord Rosebery's view prevailed – the Boers had begun the war and it must be fought to a finish.[1] Even Mr. Leonard (afterwards Lord) Courtney, who had equalled Stead in his condemnation of the war's injustice, yet hoped for victory, a swift victory to be followed by a generous peace. A passage from a speech by Mr. Courtney in January 1900, and Stead's reply, will show us how the moderate pro-Boers, so to call them, and the extremists differed in their attitude at that date. To his constituents at Liskeard, Mr. Courtney spoke as follows:

'We had not, up to a recent time, had military successes. Some vindication of our strength was necessary before we could have Peace, but the first opportunity should be seized when that had been done of seeing whether Peace could not be re-established. He did

[1] A letter from Lord Rosebery to Stead, written a month later, December 18, 1899, emphasizes the divergence of their views. Lord Rosebery says he does not know how Stead, as Prime Minister, would have dealt with the Boer ultimatum, but he has no doubt whatever as to the reception Stead's hero, Cromwell, would have given it. For his own part, he adhered to the view that the war began with the ultimatum, and he was more than ever bent on seeing it through.

not want the Government to proclaim at once with what they would be content. That must depend on the progress of events. But, whatever the settlement, it would be full of difficulty and danger for the future. If we carried this War on to the point of a complete subjugation, and desired to keep an army of 50,000 men, there would be an agitation at home against it, and at the next change of Government the restoration of some kind of independence would be the cry. If we could get that demonstration of military power which was now the first necessity of Peace, if we could get the forts demolished, and the armaments of the Boers reduced to the natural scale, with a repetition of the offer of the five years' franchise, it would be wise in us not to attempt to upset the existing political independence of the States, but to let them recover their position. We must either grant independence with these limitations, and perhaps the rearrangement of the frontier to make a separate province out of the portion of country inhabited by the Outlanders, or we must face the experiment of keeping these people down by force – a system which England would never endure.'

Stead deplored this attitude. He could understand its adoption by those Liberals who felt with Lord Rosebery; but, he asked, what was to be thought of its being taken up by one who condemned the war as a crime?

'Of course,' he continued, 'Mr. Courtney may reply that he is not discussing what ought to be done, but confining himself to a discussion of what might possibly be done, in the present state of public opinion. But we shall confirm the public in its worst delusions and prejudices, if we do not make it quite clear that in our opinion it is utterly mistaken, and that if right were done the question which we should be discussing is not what terms we should extract from the Boers, but rather what compensation we can offer them for the piratical outrage of which they have been the victims. Surely that ought to be postulated before we consent to discuss anything that may have to be done under the violence of popular passion, or under the stress of imperial pride.'

He concludes his article thus:

'What we want is not to prosecute an unjust war more vigorously,

but to arrest its prosecution altogether. As for Lord Rosebery, he spoke after his wont. There is much jubilation over his declaration that in a contest with two small communities as numerous as the population of West Ham "we have not touched the bottom of the resources of Old England yet." To such extremities is the Liberal Imperialist reduced to-day!

'The indomitable Dutchmen of South Africa have, indeed, reason to feel proud that their stern decision to die rather than surrender their independence has reduced Lord Rosebery to such a condition that he feels it quite heroic to declare that a struggle with such diminutive antagonists has not as yet exhausted the resources of the richest and mightiest empire in the world!'

* * *

Perhaps Stead's most effective stroke was the addressing of an 'open letter' to the House of Commons on the occasion of Parliament's reassembling on Tuesday, January 30, 1900. A copy of this two-page communication, boldly printed on good paper, was posted to the private address of every member of the House. In a covering letter to the Speaker, with which a copy of it was enclosed, Stead wrote:

'I have repeatedly made efforts in other directions to bring the matter dealt with in the open letter before the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers and Members of the House of Commons. The accumulating disasters which result naturally and inevitably from the fraud that has been practised upon the House of Commons leave me no option but to make this solemn and formal appeal to you in your official capacity as Speaker of the House. – I have the honour to remain your obedient servant,

'(*Signed*) WILLIAM T. STEAD.'

'*January* 29, 1900.

I need not give the 'open letter' in full. The opening and closing passages will suffice:

'GENTLEMEN, – The consequence of going to war with a Lie in our right hand is now manifest even to the dullest understanding.

'The responsibility for the Lie which is now working out its natural consequences in South Africa originally lay upon the Colonial Secretary alone. But by a conspiracy of falsehood the Select Committee of 1897 was hocussed into returning a false verdict, which,

being afterwards accepted by the House of Commons, involved Parliament itself in responsibility for a fatal fraud.'

* * *

'The honour of your honourable House is at stake in this matter. Outside this country everyone believes that a deliberate fraud has been practised upon you for the purpose of shielding the Colonial Secretary. This universal suspicion is based upon the suppression of material evidence, the silencing of the most important witness, and the subsequent conduct of the Colonial Secretary in dealing with Mr. Rhodes and his fellow-conspirators.

'If, after the "new facts" recently brought to light, your honourable House takes no steps to ascertain the truth or to punish the guilty, it will no longer be possible to maintain that you are unwitting and unwilling accomplices in this conspiracy to conceal the truth and to palm off a false finding upon the world. – I am, your obedient servant,

'WILLIAM T. STEAD.'

'Mowbray House, Norfolk-street, W.C.
*January* 29, 1900.'

Stead did not flatter himself that his words would achieve anything. They needed saying and he made quite sure of their being read: that was all he could do. How Mr. Chamberlain read them we are told by an eye-witness:

'Mr. Stead (wrote the London correspondent of the *Sussex Daily News*) will be gratified to learn that his Open Letter to Members of the House of Commons impugning the honour and veracity of Mr. Chamberlain has had at least one attentive reader in the person of Mr. Chamberlain himself. During the debate on the Address a gaily irresponsible gentleman from Ireland is understood to have sent his copy of the letter enclosed in an envelope addressed to the Colonial Secretary, and marked "urgent." The important-looking document was carefully handed along the Treasury Bench until it reached Mr. Chamberlain, who immediately put up his monocle and began to peruse its contents. If the humorist who dispatched it hoped to witness any change in the cold impassivity of the Colonial Secretary's face he must have been sorely disappointed. The statesman did not even wipe his eyeglass with surprise as he slowly read Mr. Stead's imprecatory epistle. When he got to the end he made as if to pencil

a caustic comment on the margin, but then, looking as though it was not worth the trouble, he crushed the missive into a ball and tossed it into the waste-paper basket.'

Mr. Chamberlain's harshest critics had to admire his 'cold impassivity' at such moments as this!

## III

### THE YEAR 1900 – THE KHAKI ELECTION

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Stead's pro-Boer deliverances – his long series of pamphlets, his articles in the *Review of Reviews* and in the newspapers, notably in his own new weekly organ, *War against War in South Africa*, and his innumerable public speeches – would fill an entire volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. And these deliverances were really his life during the period of the war. He did not – he never could – close his mind to other interests. His spiritualistic experiences still occupied him. He sailed and bathed at Hayling in the summer. He was continually making new acquaintances and friends – scores of them, hundreds of them. He read and reviewed books of all sorts. He lunched and dined with Lord Esher and Colonel Brocklehurst and Miss Elizabeth Robins and Mr. J. A. Spender and other friends. He paid his second visit to Ober-Ammergau. He had a thousand other distractions and diversions. But three-fourths of his time and energy were absorbed by the war.

The year 1900, it will be remembered, opened well for the British with Cronje's surrender at Paardeberg and the relief of Ladysmith in February, followed by the relief of Mafeking in May. De Wet's raids began in June, and by August he had gone far towards realizing the threat attributed to him, that, whereas his home, which had been destroyed, had cost only £2,000 to build, it would cost England £2,000,000 to reconstruct. In September came the 'Khaki Election,' the Government appealing to the country for a mandate to prosecute the war to the successful issue now thought to be in sight, and their supporters adopting the battle cry invented by Mr. Wanklyn, a candidate, 'A Vote given to the Liberals is a Vote given to the Boers.' The Liberal Party as a whole was indignant, but there was no device under which Stead and his *intransigeants* would more gladly have won the day.

Stead had just paid his second visit to Ober-Ammergau and was at Berne on September 19, 1900, discussing with Mr. Ducommun, the head of the Berne International Peace Bureau, a Peace Congress which was to be held shortly in Paris, when he heard that Parliament was to be dissolved on the 25th. Within the following six days he wrote 70,000 words of *The Candidates of Cain*, and on the 27th the first printed copies of the pamphlet were ready – a very Stead-like *tour de force*. Returning at once to Paris for the Congress, he found further vent for his feelings in the composition of one of his most characteristic onslaughts upon the war. Though it should lose him tens of thousands of his readers, he had to speak out his heart.

Beginning with an outline of the week of constant strain and vivid contrast which he had been through in order that his readers may see exactly how he comes to be in the mood to say the things which he feels 'must be said,' he proceeds:

'For all the time I was travelling to and fro in the classic land of European freedom, all the time I was among the Bavarian peasant players of the Sacred Mystery, all the time that I was discussing peace programmes in Berne and in Paris, all the time I was busy writing *The Candidates of Cain*, one sound was ever surging in my ears. The cry of a nation in the death agony rang out loud and shrill across land and sea, heard plainly above the roar of cannon, the tramp of armed men, the yells of the drivers, the confused and maddening stampede of the defeated towards the frontier. And ever above the streaming clamour of maddened men and frenzied women was heard the hoarse laughter as of fiends from the nether pit, exulting in the all too articulate placard and editorial over the "glorious" exploits of the British arms. Day by day came the telegrams describing the widespread devastation that had been wrought by the advance of our victorious troops. A quarter of a million trained soldiers having at last, after twelve months' effort, succeeded in breaking down the resistance of 40,000 undisciplined men and boys, the work of avenging the long-drawn-out humiliation of the last year was being accomplished with horrible completeness. The sky flared red with the burning homesteads of the country folk, the veldt was dotted with the figures, frozen and starved, of the women and children upon whom we are waging war. What twelve months ago was regarded as but an exaggerated phrase is now seen and

recognized by all men to be a prosaic definition of what has actually taken place. Hell is let loose in South Africa and millions of moral, religious and Christian Englishmen are warming their hands at the flames – really believing that they are fulfilling the law of Love and promoting the establishment of the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace.'

It was with his mind full of such thoughts, he says, that he sat out the Passion Play, contrasting its poignant beauty with the 'unreal theatricalities' of the English churches, impotent or complacent or frankly Jingo, as they were showing themselves in the face of the South African tragedy:

'These ministers of Christ (he wrote) exult in combining Christ and Carnage . . . they say their prayers and sing their hymns and preach their sermons, and imagine that this is religion! The Passion Play may be a blasphemous farce, as some pious critics who have not seen it aver; but it is a thousand times less of an unreality and an abomination than the "Divine worship" that is offered in churches by men whose hands are dripping red with their brothers' blood.'

From Ober-Ammergau, Stead had gone to the regions of Tell and of Hofer. At Innsbrück he visited the tomb of the Tyrolese patriot:

'I found his statue standing in a place of high honour in the midst of effigies of mighty monarchs whose very names are strange and unfamiliar. But the memory of the peasant leader, the son of the village publican, is as fresh to-day as it was when first his ashes were laid to rest in the Hof Kirche.

'And as I looked at his statue, and then, coming out of the church, looked up at the snow-capped mountains, the eternal monument of the patriot chief, my thoughts reverted to another continent where, against even greater odds, the Hofer of our own times was still keeping up a desperate struggle against the overwhelming forces of the British Empire.'

'We reverence Hofer,' Stead exclaims, 'we hunt De Wet.' Yet the Boers, judged by any and every test, were heroes more superb even than Hofer and his Tyrolese:

'The men of the Tyrol in 1807 always outnumbered the most powerful armies that could be spared to operate against them. They were far more numerous than the Boers. They occupied a much more

difficult country, and the whole forces of a great military empire could never be massed for their destruction. The Boers, men and boys together numbering only 40,000, had to withstand the onslaught of the whole military strength of the British Empire. They had not a leader in their midst of scientific military training. They were opposed to the picked generals of an Empire which practically always was at war. Yet against odds which at least were six to one they kept up the desperate struggle for a whole twelvemonth. They were in the end as unable to save their fatherland as Leonidas and his 300 men were unable to check the advance of Xerxes' million. They did not succumb until they had inflicted on their arrogant foe the loss of 10,000 dead and 50,000 sick and wounded. But that was a bagatelle to the blow which their determined valour dealt to the military prestige of the victor. The Boers, although defeated, have won for themselves imperishable glory, while the much-vaunted prestige of the victor hangs shrivelled like a bladder exposed to the derision of the world.'

Finally, Stead applies, *more suo*, the Parable of the Passion.

Even at the Paris Peace Congress, actually in session while he was writing, a not dissimilar homily had been looked at askance – a picture of Christ gazing down in sorrow from the cloud of Heaven on the carnage of a battle-field. The introduction of any allusion to the Nazarene was resented by many. Stead wishes they could have been at Ober-Ammergau:

'For the peasants of the Tyrol have preserved the true tradition of the Christ. When that pathetic but sublime figure appears on the stage the obscuring mists of ecclesiasticism and the prejudices of centuries of intolerant orthodoxy fade away. We are face to face with the carpenter's son, the Man of Sorrows, the proscribed Revolutionist, the hated Heretic, to compass whose destruction the most powerful forces of Church and State, of Clericalism and Nationalism, banded themselves together. But that which gives so startlingly modern a note to the Passion Play is the bold relief into which it throws the most salient feature of modern politics – the domination of the money power. The war in South Africa was not more certainly brought about by the action of the financiers than the Crucifixion of Christ was the result of the agitation of the moneyed traders in the Temple. The Crucifixion, like the destruction of the South African

Republic, was the work of the capitalist. The very first act in the Passion Play brings this out with utmost clearness. The Sacerdotalists, the High Priests, and the Jingoes of Jerusalem gnashed their teeth in savage but impotent wrath as they noted the continually increasing enthusiasm of the people for the Prophet from Nazareth. This popular movement culminated in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when Jesus, arming himself with a scourge of small cords, drove the traders and the money-changers from the Temple. Until Jesus struck at the servants of Mammon, and cleansed the Temple of the tumult of the usurers, His enemies had been powerless. But the moment He laid His hand upon the chartered rights of the moneyed class, His doom was sealed. It was the alliance between the Sanhedrim and the traders of the Temple that was fatal to the Galilean, just as in our time it was an alliance between the clerics, the journalists, and the capitalists that brought on this war. No one can see the play without feeling that the pivot upon which everything turns in the great tragedy of the Passion was not the offended pride of the rulers, or the sacerdotal intolerance of the priests, but the simple, everyday, sordid spirit of the traders who, to avenge the loss of their usurious gains, slew the Son of God and hanged Him on a tree. As the chorus sing:

> '"In this that's set before our eyes
> A picture true of this world lies.
> How often through your deeds have you
> Betrayed and sold your God anew?"

'The mind, once turned in this direction, becomes absorbed with the parallel. Soon all thought of the historical significance of the story on the stage faded away. I saw no longer Jerusalem and the Temple of 1900 years agone. The whole scene took place in London – in Parliament and in the Stock Exchange. Mary's Son became to me but the symbol of the Dutch nationality in South Africa. Pray do not let any reader imagine from this that I regard the Afrikanders as impeccable or divine. They are neither. But they are sons of men who assuredly may rank at least with the outcast and the slave as the least of these His brethren, akin to Him in their suffering humanity, being at this moment, indeed, men of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Gradually, one by one, all the characters became transformed. They still wore their Oriental or Roman costume, but their features

were familiar to me, I seemed to recognize their voices. I lived over again the year of strife and strain and struggle now drawing to a bloody close.'

The article ends with a message of hope to the Boers. For England and the English there was no prospect but of judgment to come. The victim of our vengeance, however, might take comfort from the thought that the Passion Play did not end with the Crucifixion – the last scene of it portrayed the Resurrection and the Ascension:

'*Sursum Corda!* O children of tribulation! The birthday of the free Afrikander nation of the future may not be further removed from the death-day of the Republic than the three days which divided the Resurrection from the Crucifixion!'

## IV

### STEAD AND THE BOER REPRESENTATIVES IN EUROPE

'The one and solitary cause of the prolongation of the war, so far as I know, is the belief the Boers have that they have, not in Europe, or America, or South Africa, but in this country, a body of opinion which, if the time does come, will control the destinies of this country and carry out a policy consonant to their view.' – Mr. A. J. BALFOUR in the House of Commons, July 5, 1901.

During 1900 and the first half of 1901, Stead had been in constant communication with several of the Boer leaders who were visiting Europe, and these remarks of Mr. Balfour's gave him a good opportunity for making public in a letter to the Press the substance of what he had said to them and they to him.[1] In answer to Mr. Balfour he wrote as follows:

'I am glad to note Mr. Balfour's qualifying phrase "so far as I know," because it is evident his knowledge extends a very little way. But as the delusion under which he is labouring appears to be somewhat general, may I ask your permission to state my grounds for knowing that so far from Mr. Balfour's assertion being true, it is exactly opposite to the truth.

[1] His first interview with President Kruger at The Hague just before Christmas in 1900 had been something of a journalistic sensation. His account of it, written for the Associated Press of America, was translated into most of the European languages.

'I think I may venture to claim some right to know what I am writing about. As a journalist and as an advocate of international arbitration, it has been my privilege to have met on several occasions since the war broke out the leading representatives of the two republics now in Europe: President Kruger, Mr. Fischer, Dr. Leyds, Mr. Wessels, Mr. Wolmarans, Mrs. Reitz, and others. I have seen them all, and have had ample opportunity of ascertaining their views, and to learn the motives which impel them to persist in their present uncompromising policy. It may be a surprise to some people, but it is, I believe, a simple statement of a literal fact that, as there would have been no ultimatum and no war if there had been a strong opposition resolute to prevent any attack upon the independence of the South African Republics, so the war might have been ended upon Canadian terms six months ago if the Boers could have seen behind the sinister figure of Mr. Chamberlain any party strong and resolute enough to prevent him from going back upon his word, as he had so often done before. . . . In short, the action of the Boers from the day of the ultimatum until now has been dominated, not by their belief in the existence of a strong body of sympathizers in this country ready to help them at some early date, but to their own deeply-rooted conviction that their friends in this country are a mere handful – well-meaning, but absolutely impotent – and that they cannot possibly count with any confidence upon help from any English party strong enough to influence British policy. Mr. Balfour seems to think the Boers have a simple and childlike faith in the devotion of the Liberal party to their cause. They have no such confidence, and in the nature of things it is impossible that they could have.'

Stead himself had been charged with encouraging the Boers in the belief that they could count on the sympathies of the Liberal Party. He proceeds to declare that he had done nothing of the kind. On the contrary:

'When the peace delegates were sent from South Africa to Europe they consulted as to the possibility of negotiating a peace. I told them at once that they could have peace at any moment if they would consent to unconditional surrender; but if they shrank from that sacrifice the war would go on, and there was no party, or visible fraction of a party, in England or Scotland who could for a single moment prevent the Government from carrying out the policy of

conquest and subjugation. Nothing could possibly have been plainer than the assurances which I gave them as to the utter impotence of the friends of peace to interfere in any way whatever on their behalf. And this testimony has never varied. So far from holding out hopes that public opinion is changing, or that the Liberal party will help them to an honourable peace, I have always told them that, except God, they had no one to depend upon, and that not even Mr. Labouchere was ready to speak or vote in favour of their independence. The platonic sympathies of the Liberals who oppose the war as unjust and unnecessary, and at the same time express a passionate desire for the early and complete victory of the British arms, is appraised by them at its proper value. As a factor in the problem of the framing of Boer policy the English Opposition does not exist.'

Correspondence and conversation with the Boer representatives continued to take up much of Stead's time throughout the rest of 1901 and the whole of 1902. A single illustration will indicate something of their nature and something also of the difficulties and dangers inseparable from the kind of intervention which he attempted. A letter to Lord Salisbury and two letters from Mr. Fischer will serve this purpose. One of the most noteworthy of the meetings had taken place at The Hague just before the debate in the House of Commons in which Mr. Balfour spoke the words cited above. Stead had had an opportunity of discussing the whole situation with Mr. Fischer, Mr. Wessels, Dr. Leyds, and Mrs. Reitz, wife of the Boer General. Returned to London, he proceeded to report to Lord Salisbury in writing the substance of what he had heard: he understood that he was free to do this – that, in fact, the Boer representatives whom he had been seeing intended him to act thus as a channel of communication between them and the British Government. He told the Prime Minister accordingly how, in reply to the question whether opinion was changing in England, he had replied: that it was not changing in the least; that while even Mr. Chamberlain would no longer feel it was a feather in his cap to have made the war, there was not the least hope of any abandonment of the campaign; how the Boers had asked him if Milner was going back, and how he had replied: 'Certain sure. The Government dare not do otherwise. Milner holds them in the hollow of his hand'; and how Mr. Reitz had exclaimed: 'It is the best news that has come from England for a long time. Nothing

will help so well to keep our commandos full.' The Boer leaders were quite indifferent, Stead went on to say, over the collapse of the Liberal Party, having placed no reliance on it; and, realizing that the comparatively small section of out-and-out pro-Boers wielded no influence, they would not listen to his (Stead's) representations to them in favour of a more conciliatory attitude on their own part. They saw that they were face to face with Mr. Chamberlain, and they were prepared to fight until their last man had fired his last cartridge. An attempt was being made to bring pressure upon the burghers to lay down their arms by burning down their homes and destroying their means of subsistence, and then herding their women and children in huge pestilential camps where the children perished for lack of milk. But they had cartridges for at least twelve months longer and their confidence in ultimate success had increased since Stead's last visit. The letter to the Prime Minister concludes dryly:

'Hoping that these notes may be useful to you,
'Your obedient Servant,
'W. T. STEAD.'

Dr. Leyds seems to have been disturbed when, in due course, Stead reported to him that he had reported their communication to Lord Salisbury, for, some months afterwards, we find Mr. Fischer writing to Stead on the subject somewhat anxiously. He has full trust in Stead himself and in his good intentions, but he has no trust in Lord Salisbury and less than none in certain other members of the British Government. 'Believing as I do,' he continues, 'that all we say would be wilfully distorted, or anyway used against us, and certainly not in the interests of our poor people and country, I thought it best not to write to you again, because I would thereby be placing you in the dilemma of having to hide from others what your communications with "the enemy" amounted to, or otherwise of disclosing what was intended by us to be confidential communications for your information but not for repetition – at least not to our unscrupulous enemies.'

Stead, in his turn, became disturbed, fearing that he was being thought guilty of a betrayal of confidence, but Mr. Fischer hastened to disabuse him of this idea. There had been a misunderstanding – that was all. 'I never, in thought even,' he declares, 'imputed to you anything that could bear the construction of a betrayal of confidence.' And he insists emphatically, 'When I say I trust you, I mean it.'

## V

### STEAD AND COLONEL BROCKLEHURST ON THE WAR

It would have been a matter of astonishment for the people who during these war years regarded Stead as a pestilent traitor if they had known the terms of close and cordial friendship he was able to preserve unbroken with Colonel Brocklehurst, Equerry to Queen Victoria from 1899 until her death, and afterwards to Queen Alexandra. Although Brocklehurst's name has recurred in this narrative only once or twice since the date of the Gordon interview in 1884, he and Stead had remained in constant touch ever since. Such of his letters to Stead as are available are very good reading – it is a pity that the earlier ones are missing. It is, above all, to be regretted that Brocklehurst himself – Lord Ranksborough, to use the title by which he was known from 1914 – is not alive to give us his impressions of Stead as he knew him. Few people knew Stead so intimately.[1]

Among the most interesting of the letters which have been preserved are those which touch upon the years 1900–2, and they often throw some light upon Stead's attitude and actions at the period.

Early in 1900, Stead was full of a very Stead-like notion: Rhodes, with the approval, of course, of the British Government, was to approach the Boer leaders in person, hold a palaver with them and bring the war forthwith to an end!

Brocklehurst, it is clear, was fascinated by this daring conception. Not only did he discuss it with Dr. Jameson, who was a bit shocked, and with some very distinguished personages in the political world, but he actually cabled of his own accord to Rhodes the significant message:

'Don't be afraid remember the Matabele settlement.'

'Don't let on,' Brocklehurst wrote laughingly to Stead that same day, December 6, 'as the Doctor will kill me if he finds it out.'

Less than three weeks later, Dr. 'Jim' himself seems to have been won over, for on December 23 we find Brocklehurst writing:

'Hawkesley, the Doctor and I decided in solemn conclave on Friday night that Rosebery was the man to give Lord Salisbury a lead on your scheme. I went down to Mentmore yesterday where he was

[1] Lord Ranksborough sent me early in 1921 all that he had kept of his correspondence with Stead.

supposed to be but was not. It seems to me good to play up to this – we can't get at it too soon. Send for Hawkesley to talk it over.'

On January 5, being just then at Osborne, Brocklehurst refers again to the subject incidentally. He had occasion, he says, to reassure Earl Grey as to Stead's doings – Grey had got the impression somehow that Stead 'was going for Rhodes.' 'I explained,' writes Brocklehurst, 'that you were Arbitration-mad but had lucid intervals during one of which you had started the most practical cure for the present state of things. I am pushing your proposal for all I am worth here, so don't go and upset your own child in visionary flights with St. Paul Kruger.'

And he adds a cheerful postscript:

'Things are really moving a bit in the right direction, I do believe, on the lines that some one draws Lord Salisbury – Lord S. issues a Ukase (nice word) – Rhodes comes out of his tent – Chorus of Peace – The Millennium.'

'Joe Chamberlain comes to-morrow,' he writes four days later. 'Wire me if there is anything I can tackle him about. . . . Rhodes is now playing doggo to Milner, I take it, as he cannot see his way – I don't wonder, for I cannot meet anyone who can see his way.'

A letter from Brooks's dated January 24, shows that Brocklehurst is back in London and still exerting himself in the same direction. He has seen Lord Rosebery and told him that Stead 'thought he (R.) was the only hope of waking up the Government'; he has also interested 'C.B.' in the matter, and 'Dr. Jim' apparently has been introducing 'the child' at the Cape.

A note from Ranksborough dated February 6 recalls the fact that Queen Victoria had died in January. Brocklehurst was doubtless familiar with some of the many articles which Stead had written about the late Sovereign and knew something of his very real admiration for her. 'I have got a bunch of violets for you from the Queen's grave,' he writes.

On February 13, writing from his London quarters, 2 Down Street, Piccadilly, Brocklehurst is less sanguine about Stead's scheme than in the previous month. 'There is a strong idea that the war is coming to an end,' he says, 'and hearts are hardening in consequence.' But

he has impressed on Sir Dighton Probyn that the King should know that 'the Dutch, who want peace, are looking to his accession to bring it about.' He adds a very interesting remark: 'A propos the Queen's death I should say the dominant note was that she meant to die QUEEN without a shadow of Regency.'

In March 1901, the spokesmen of the Dutch of Cape Colony, Sauer and Merriman, were in London, holding consultations, not very amicably, with Mr. Chamberlain and the Government. Brocklehurst, writing on March 19, fears that their advent 'has hardened wavering hearts and upset our little cart.'

Upset, in any case, their little cart was! The war continued and within a few weeks Rhodes was dead.

One other allusion to Rhodes, dated April 27, deserves transcription: how he himself would have enjoyed it! Brocklehurst had just returned from a visit to the King and Queen of Denmark: 'Yes, I read the *Review of Reviews* [1] at Copenhagen and also used it freely in my attack on the anti-Rhodes division out there, a strong one. Thanks to my violence, your Paper and his Will, I left them all on their backs.'

Even when Colonel Brocklehurst is obliged to oppose Stead, and to condemn his actions and writings, the letters remain extraordinarily good-humoured. There was perhaps nothing that evoked more bitterness during the war than certain accusations of barbarity made against Lord Kitchener by 'a British Officer' whom Stead knew personally and believed in, but whose identity was concealed. This was one of the matters which drew rebukes from Brocklehurst, who writes (January 18, 1901), condemning the officer in question for stabbing in the dark. 'It is not your way of doing business,' he goes on: 'Tell your "unblemished one" to come into the open if he wants honest men to follow him.'

Brocklehurst loses patience frequently enough with Stead's stories of British misdeeds contrasted with Boer magnanimity, but he never loses his temper. He admits in one letter (Sept. 27, 1902), that doubtless some of the things Stead has learnt from Mr. Hofmeyr in this connection may have been true, but Stead should hear old Mrs. de Souza also on the subject. This old lady, a great friend of Brocklehurst, has her fund of stories also, and they all tell the other way.

[1] The provisions of Rhodes's wonderful Will had just been made public, and the *Review of Reviews* for April was full of the subject.

'Mrs. de Souza could give Hofmeyr a stone and a beating *over the same course*.' The fact is, he moralizes, 'war is war, and a very nasty, beastly, dirty, undignified business at the best.'

He differs from Stead in his estimate of the Boer Generals who have been touring Europe in 1902, interviewing the Kaiser, etc. Stead, as we have seen, had been holding converse with them and trying in every way to help them. Brocklehurst distrusts them. 'In my opinion,' he writes on October 14, 1902, 'this tour has for its sole object the raising of hatred against England.' He thinks Dr. Leyds is at the bottom of it all, and he declares that he does not see how peace negotiations can be satisfactorily proceeded with as long as men like Stead lend such proceedings their countenance. 'This is awful cheek,' he ends, 'but I know you don't mind what I say. Remember I am a pro-Boer, and so I am, but not of the Dr. Leyds type.'

Several letters are with reference to unfortunate private soldiers who have appealed to Stead for help regarding their personal grievances or ill-luck – some of them genuine sufferers, others humbugs. Brocklehurst inquires into each case conscientiously and reports to Stead in full, never weary of thus serving his friend, in fact encouraging him in his sometimes misdirected good-nature. 'Please don't mind writing to me about things like this,' he says à propos of a Colonial trooper whose complaints had been shown to be quite ill-founded, 'and I will always help you if I can.'

So the letters continue, month by month – full of sympathy, active friendship and good fellowship, enlivened by high spirits and chaff. 'You haven't by chance got a Spook who knows what is going to win to-morrow?' he asks on the eve of a race-meeting. The last letter for 1902, dated December 31, ends thus: 'Well, good-bye and Bless you, and may you be, like the Empire, a Blessing to the Human Race for many years to come!'

## VI

### STEAD, MILNER AND GARRETT

Although imperilled frequently, Stead's friendship with Milner and Garrett was to survive the war. A few extracts from some of Garrett's letters to him at the end of 1899, and in the early part of 1902, will be of interest here.

Readers of Sir E. T. Cook's memoir of Edmund Garrett will recall

the chapter entitled 'Broken Threads,' descriptive of his life at Nordrach, the famous sanatorium. It was Garrett's second visit there. He had overtaxed his strength when his personal fortunes were at their highest and when South Africa, so he felt, most needed the services he had hoped to render in 'that strangely fascinating problem-country.'

Writing from Nordrach in December 1899, he exchanged a number of argumentative letters with Stead. They had had a really angry dispute already in print. Stead's declaration that he would back Milner 'up to ultimatum point' had been misinterpreted by Garrett, and Stead had hotly resented alike the misinterpretation and the somewhat acrid criticism which Garrett had proceeded to base upon it. That quarrel was now over and the two friends were able once again to continue their disputation upon terms of genial candour, but even now they were sensitive.

On December 12, Garrett, in answer to some remarks of Stead's regarding the origin of the war, writes:

'I went by Hofmeyr, who wanted Kruger to give Milner's five years with no conditions, and was very sick when they added those which for the time wrecked it, and still more sick when they later withdrew and headed for war. *Hoffy* certainly didn't want war, and, but for Steyn and Reitz. . . . I doubt if old K. would have deliberately made war either. We have at worst bungled – history must decide whether the action of the other side is a folly or a crime. It looks less like the former as time passes – and more like the latter.'

Proceeding to reiterate his disavowal of notions attributed to him on the strength of 'yarns from our visionary Olive' (Olive Schreiner, to whom he alludes always in terms of affection or admiration, even when most widely differing from her), he remonstrates with Stead for imputing untruth to him in the matter:

'But on my side, though I do nothing comparable to accusing my friend of a lie (only of favouring a policy which to *me* seems a lying one), yet I own I do bitterly feel, on grounds mainly impersonal, your present divagations, matter, manner, method and all about it; I cannot frame words consistent with friendship about any part of your present S.A. campaign. I therefore cannot blame you much for any excesses on your side. If I blurted out how it all strikes me, I

should say things as bad – you will reply: "You did – in the *Contemporary*." [1] I tell myself a hundred times that these differences don't affect my feeling to a real friend. Nor shall they ultimately. But the moment is too insistent, S. Africa is too close to me, we must wait till the storm is less. Till then we can't discuss as of old – only, as here, touch a fringe. But even as I write, stranded here by a breakdown, there comes back to me the memory of my first breakdown years and years ago – ten years ago: and of the hearty words of cheer and human help I had from you in those days, and the first S.A. trip – your own idea – which ultimately led up to all our present difference, but to some of the best years also of my life. And I, remembering all this, and more, feel return a wave of the old affectionate feeling towards the most tangential yet the most human-hearted of men – and I wish you, despite all, my dear Stead, you and yours, a thousand Christmas and New Year wishes and feel convinced I am still on that quaint "Rosary" of your devising.'

In the spring of 1902 Garrett was back in England, still in precarious health. He writes to Stead on April 12 of this year from the East Anglian Sanatorium, Nayland, Suffolk, expressing the hope that they may meet ere long:

'You will have understood,' he says, 'that I didn't answer your last letter, not because I sulked or hadn't got good answers about the points raised – I had clinking answers on all, as you shall know some day if I live – and, by the by, always remember if I am silent or die, or you die either, without our having it out square about S.A., that I love the inner man, Stead, in spite of all differences, and should love him if he damned me and my policy and acts ten times more. So does Milner – in the inner court – we agreed when he was over – only there are temporary limitations and avoidances.'

And, reflecting upon some words which Stead had written to him, indicative of soreness, he adds a P.S.

'Don't take Milner that way. He told me why he thought on the whole he'd better not see you this time. I quite understood, though I'm not sure whether you would; but I'm sure you would have liked the way in which, without any prompting at all, he spoke of his personal feelings for you being unaffected by all this.

[1] *Contemporary Review* for 1899.

'Some day, let us hope, all this tyranny will be overpast, and we shall be able to agree again, you and Milner, Cook and I.'

And so it was to prove eventually, although, as we shall see, Stead's relations with Milner were still to undergo at least one other severe ordeal.

## VII

### STEAD AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN DUTCH

A passage in one of those letters received from Garrett in December, 1899, will help us to gauge the conflict of opinion between him and Stead as to the problem of South Africa. 'As for me,' Garrett wrote, 'if S.A. is to be united only on a Dutch basis, it shall never, so far as I can help, be united at all. It means Johannesburg in thrall to a Pretoria on a large scale. Squalid, anti-industrial militarism – conscientious Anglophobia and negrophobia – these must not have the plant of government again! In the near future we should be able to set the whole show up on equal lines with a narrow non-Dutch majority in both Federal Chambers.'

It was almost incredible to Garrett that anyone loving England could hold a view contrary to this. And yet a few weeks previous Olive Schreiner, the noble-minded woman of genius whom in South Africa Garrett himself had learnt to love, was writing to Stead as follows: [1]

'MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND,

'Stand by justice and freedom in this matter to the end. You will be glad to think of it when you are dying.

'Oh, the people of England have not understood, they have not understood. There is a time coming of terrible awakening when they understand what they have done.

'Our gallant, heroic Transvaalers are dying, and brave English soldiers are falling, and the miserable hordes of blood-suckers and money-makers are quietly in hiding, to come out when the war is over to dig their claws into our hearts.

'If England could but see that Chamberlain is undermining the foundations of the Empire, the true Empire of which South Africans have dreamed, and which shall be a great confederacy of the nations

[1] *War against War in South Africa*, November 24, 1899.

not crushed beneath her heel, but bound to her by indissoluble ties of love and sympathy.

'Chamberlain is stabbing the heart of the British Empire.

'Good-by,

'OLIVE SCHREINER.'

Olive Schreiner's ideal of Empire had been Rhodes's ideal in earlier days, the days before the Raid, the days when Stead could extol him as 'the ally of the Dutch and the Irish, the great Colonist working for Federation through Home Rule.' It was Stead's own ideal still. For him the 'Dutch basis' in South Africa was not only inevitable but every bit as acceptable as the French basis in Eastern Canada. An ardent Radical, he was all for progress and reform, but there were progressives and reformers among the Boers, and Kruger was very old. War, in all the circumstances, was in Stead's eyes at once a blunder and a crime.

Had Stead been a dweller in South Africa himself throughout the second half of the 'Nineties, editing the *Cape Times* in place of Garrett, or, like his own heroine, Jeanne Leflo,[1] taking the lead among the Outlanders of Johannesburg, it would, of course, have been difficult for him, with his eager temperament, to practise the doctrine of Patience which he preached, and which he had learned from Olive Schreiner. So much may be admitted.

But the doctrine, however difficult, was surely full of wisdom. The reader will find it set forth at length, and with moving eloquence, in Olive Schreiner's *Words in Season*, published in the autumn of 1899. Stead cited several passages from the book in the *Review of Reviews* for October of that year, remarking, rather quaintly but very truly, that they contained reflections which bachelor politicians like Milner and Garrett were sometimes in danger of underestimating. I shall transcribe one or two of these passages here. Even among Stead's greatest admirers there are many people who are still mystified over his hostility to the South African War. Friends of my own, knowing of my interest in Stead, have asked me, wonderingly, to explain this 'aberration' of his, assuming that I myself must regard it as all but inexplicable. These *Words in Season* may be enlightening. To Stead they semed to contain the essential truth of the matter.

'In the Cape Colony, and increasingly in the two Republics, are

[1] See p. 96.

found enormous numbers of cultured and polished Dutch-descended South Africans using English as their daily form of speech, and in no way distinguishable from the rest of the nineteenth century Europeans. Our most noted judges, our most eloquent lawyers, our most skilful physicians, are frequently men of this blood; the lists of the yearly examinations of our Cape University are largely filled with Dutch names, and women as well as men rank high in the order of merit. It would sometimes almost seem as if the long repose the people have had from the heated life of cities, with the large tax upon the nervous system, had sent them back to the world of intellectual occupations with more than the ordinary grasp of power. In many cases they go home to Europe to study, and doubtless their college life and English friendships bind Britain close to their hearts as to ours who are English born. The present State Attorney of the Transvaal is a man who has taken some of the highest honours Cambridge can bestow. Besides, there exist still our old simple farmers or Boers, found in the greatest perfection in the midland districts of the Colony, in the Transvaal and Free State, who constitute a large part of the virile backbone of South Africa. Clinging to their old seventeenth century faiths and manners, and speaking their African taal, they are yet tending to pass rapidly away, displaced by their own cultured modern children; but they still form a large and powerful body. Year by year the lines dividing the South Africans from their more lately arrived English-descent brothers are passing away.'

* * *

'There is peace to-day in the land; the two great white races, day by day, hour by hour, are blending their blood, and both are mixing with the stranger. No day passes but from the veins of some Dutch South African woman, the English South African man's child is being fed; not a week passes but the birth-cry of the English South African woman's child gives voice to the Dutchman's offspring; not an hour passes but on farm, and in town and village, Dutch hearts are winding about English, and English about Dutch. If the Angel of Death should spread his wings across the land and strike dead in one night every man and woman and child of either the Dutch or the English blood, leaving the other alive, the land would be a land of mourning. There would be not one household, nor the heart of an African-born man or woman that would not be weary with grief.

We should weep the friends of our childhood, the companions of our early life, our grandchildren, our kindred, the souls who have loved us and whom we have loved. In destroying the one race we would have isolated the other. Time, the great healer of all differences, is blending us into a great mutual people, and love is moving faster than time. It is no growing hatred between Dutch and English South African born men and women that calls for war. On the lips of babes we salute both races daily.'

* * *

'I know of no more graphic image in the history of the world than the figure of Franklin when he stood before the Lords of Council in England, giving evidence, striving, fighting, to save America for England. Browbeaten, flouted, jeered at by the courtiers, his words hurled back at him as lies, he stood there fighting for England. England recognizes now that it was he who tried to save an empire for her; and that the men who flouted and browbeat him, lost it. There is nothing more pathetic than the way in which Americans who loved England, Washington and Franklin, strove to keep the maiden vessel moored close to her mother's side, bound by bonds of love and sympathy, that alone could bind them. Their hands were beaten down, bruised and bleeding, wounded by the very men they came to save, till they let go the mother ship and drifted away on their own great imperial course across the seas of time.

'England knows now what those men strove to do for her, and the names of Washington and Franklin will ever stand high in honour where the English tongue is spoken; the names of Hutchinson, and North, and Grafton are not forgotten also; it might be well for them if they were!

'Do not say to us: "You Englishmen, when the war is over, you can wrap the mantle of our imperial glory around you and walk about boasting that the victory is yours."

'We could never wrap that mantle round us again. We have worn it with pride. We could never wear it then. There would be blood upon it, and the blood would be our brothers'.'

Assuming that Stead was right in condemning the war, how far was he justified in his unwavering, untiring, uncompromising opposition to it, once his countrymen were in arms? Many people, in different degrees, will be inclined to condemn him still, as he was condemned

then. Speaking for myself, I would say he was justified up to the hilt.[1] And as one evidence of this I would point to the effect of his words and actions on the leaders of the Dutch race in South Africa. No two men were better qualified to speak for their compatriots than Mr. A. Fischer and Mr. Steyn, ex-President of the Orange Free State. After some congratulatory words regarding the completion of the twenty-first year of the existence of the *Review of Reviews*, Mr. Fischer, in a letter dated March 22, 1911, said:

'My object in writing is more particularly to express the gratitude we feel for the noble stand you and your *Review* took up in the cause of truth and justice in those dark days when prejudice and misrepresentation were doing their worst to poison the minds of your countrymen against South Africans, and succeeded but too well for a time. To-day they must be prejudiced indeed who would not acknowledge that by your courage in declaring and waging war against war, you helped as much as any public writer to make honourable peace possible and to weld lasting bonds of friendship between those who ought – had the truth been known and believed as you knew and believed it – never to have been enemies at all. Your justification has come and you may well be proud of the way your facts and forecasts have been verified as proclaimed in the *Review*.'

Ex-President Steyn, writing on the same occasion (March 19, 1911), expressed himself as follows:

'We in South Africa feel that we owe you a deep debt of gratitude not only for the fearless manner you stood by us during the war, but also for your great assistance to secure us self-government after the war. You, and other good men and women, made it possible for us to accept self-government and to work whole-heartedly for the better understanding between former foes, for with Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, you showed us that England was great enough to keep her word with a small nation.'

[1] On the understanding, of course, that he was prepared to be imprisoned or executed for rebelling against his country's Government. Every one who knew Stead knew that he would go gladly either to gaol or to the scaffold in such a cause.

## CHAPTER 25

# STEAD'S FRIENDSHIP WITH CECIL RHODES – THEIR TALKS TOGETHER, 1891–1901

### I

In the eyes of many of his Radical associates, Stead's friendship with Cecil Rhodes seemed almost as inexplicable as his tolerance for – not to say, his sympathy with – Russian autocracy. 'To me,' declared Mr. Labouchere in *Truth*, March 29, 1900, 'this Empire jerry-builder has always been a mere vulgar promoter masquerading as a patriot, and the figure-head of a gang of astute Hebrew financiers with whom he divided profits.' After Rhodes's death this estimate was to be revised a little. 'I do not suppose he cared for money except for the power it gave,' Mr. Labouchere wrote then, 'and though, in the making of it, he had to associate himself with a crew of financial adventurers, he was head and shoulders above them all.' That was about as far as most Radicals would go in Rhodes's praise; and that Stead could revere him as the greatest Englishman of our time seemed to them a matter alike for astonishment and for regret. People who habitually decried Stead, or laughed at him, pointed to it as one additional and perhaps crowning illustration of his incorrigible wrong-headedness. To know Stead properly, I feel, it is essential to try to know also his beloved 'Colossus.'

'Revere' and 'beloved' are strong words, but not extravagant, really, in this connection. Stead was not blind to the less admirable side of Rhodes's nature – his eyes were being continually opened to it by revelations from the great man's intimates: we shall see just now the reluctant testimony of Edmund Garrett. But, with all his weaknesses and shortcomings, Rhodes remained for him to the end something very like an idol. Garrett, also, admired Rhodes immensely, but he could not, he confesses, 'revere' him. His admiration was a long way 'on this side idolatry.'

Before we come to the talks with Rhodes with which I shall be dealing in this chapter, it may be well to try to see him more clearly as Stead and Garrett saw him. I shall give first some extracts from a character-sketch by Stead in the *Review of Reviews* for December, 1899.

A very timely article this must have seemed to Rhodes. Ever since the Jameson Raid he had been in the Doldrums – or, we might almost

say, in the Dock. And he was still painfully conscious of having made a dreadful mess of things. In such circumstances, and in such a frame of mind, he must have welcomed gratefully Stead's vigorous 'speech for the defence.' That is what the character-sketch was meant to be and what it amounts to. It is no mere high-flown panegyric but a skilfully conceived presentation of Rhodes's case – an appeal to the British public to understand him and place their trust in him.

Having recalled how, during the long and blundering negotiations which led up to the war, Rhodes had kept religiously in the background, maintaining the strictest reserve, and how, when hostilities at last became inevitable, he set out for Kimberley on the very eve of its investment by the Boers, Stead proceeds:

'There he is, and there he is likely to remain. He has equipped a force of 400 men at a cost of £15,000, and cheerfully awaits development of events. Of the wisdom of placing himself in such an exposed position, almost within grasp of the enemy, it is unnecessary to speak. Mr. Rhodes is not a man who acts upon calculation in such a case, but upon instinct. The same instinct which carried him into the Matoppos when it was necessary to induce the Matabele to lay down their arms, led him to throw in his lot with the beleaguered town which has sprung up round the diamond mines of De Beers. The fate of Kimberley is as nothing in popular estimation compared with the fate of Mr. Rhodes. Kimberley might be taken and retaken. The valuable machinery of De Beers might be destroyed and the town razed to the ground. These incidents of warfare would be regarded as mere trivialities compared with the sensation that would be produced if Mr. Rhodes were a captive in the hands of President Kruger. It is doubtful whether he would ever be taken alive, and throughout the Empire the disappearance of Mr. Rhodes would be counted a loss that would be dearly purchased by the annexation of both the Dutch Republics of South Africa.'

Then comes an effective illustration of Rhodes's 'bigness.' He had told Stead at their last meeting in London that he was going to follow Sir Alfred Milner blindfold – even into war. Here Rhodes and Stead parted company. The article continues:

'I drew the line at war. Mr. Rhodes drew no line, and, now that Mr.

Chamberlain's war has begun, Mr. Rhodes supports it without reserve. That he disapproves of my opposition to the war I know, but my relations with Mr. Rhodes have never been based on the principle that I had to subordinate my judgment or govern my action according to his wishes. After a tolerably long experience of working with statesmen, both at home and abroad, whose policy I have had alternately to support and oppose, I may say I know none who is so tolerant of difference of opinion, and who recognizes so fully the right of private judgment and of independent action on the part of his friends. I have repeatedly opposed Mr. Rhodes on matters on which he felt very strongly, but it has never affected the cordiality of our friendship or the sincerity of our alliance for the attainment of those objects on which we were agreed. It is true that I have never put it to quite so great a strain as at present, and it may be that Mr. Rhodes may consider that I have gone too far in opposing this war ever to resume the old confidential relations which have now lasted for nearly a dozen years. If so, I should regret it extremely, but of course that would not in the least affect the question of the right course to pursue in the present circumstances. I can hardly give a stronger proof of my inherent confidence in the broadminded tolerance of the man than to say that I do not anticipate any such result. I know the real Mr. Rhodes so well, and appreciate the greatness of his ideals. This war, important as it is and momentous as are likely to be the issues which it will raise, is but an incident. Mr. Rhodes's ideas, his aspirations, if you like, his ambitions, are too vast for him to allow difference of opinion upon detail, even such a detail as this, to affect his relations with those whom he knows to be thoroughly at one with him in his ultimate aim. . . .

'As I write these lines I remember a curious instance which illustrates the point that I am driving at. When Mr. Rhodes came home in 1896, I was very anxious to have him sent to prison, and made no secret of my desire, to him or to Ministers. Mr. Rhodes had no hankering after gaol, but although he knew that I wanted him locked up (believing that it would have been much better for him, for the cause of the Empire, and for the future of South Africa), he recognized that that was one of the questions upon which I had a right to my own opinion, and that my desire to clap him in Holloway was prompted by the same motive which led me to help him to his Charter and to support his African policy. . . .

'I have always treated Mr. Rhodes, both publicly and privately, as a man who regarded his own personal interests and his own personal aims as dust in the balance compared with his great ideal. When you have had twelve years of experience of acting on this principle, it is impossible not to know whether your working hypothesis has or has not been verified by results. After that test I shall "believe in Rhodes." '

Stead goes on to portray his hero in aspects which since then have been made familiar by Sir T. E. Fuller[1] and other biographers, but which at that time were little known and to many people almost incredible: as the man whom Gordon wanted to have with him at Khartoum; as the single-minded idealist, wholly indifferent to wealth save in so far as it might further his patriotic projects – the Millionaire with Imagination – the Thinker in Continents; as the almost ideal employer, just and thoughtful and generous, of whom it had been testified that, after the missionaries, no person had done so much for the natives of South Africa;[2] as the only white man in whom the Matabele would place their trust; and, finally, as that 'Loyola of the Empire' with whose early dreams and hopes we have in a previous chapter made acquaintance. This passage, also, I shall give in full:

'I used a phrase about Mr. Rhodes many years ago, the truth of which seems to me to be illustrated and confirmed by his support of the present war policy in South Africa. I said he was a great man whose ethical development had been somewhat neglected. Considering how many small men there are taking part in journalism and politics whose ethical development has never even begun, that fact is no reason why I should refuse to recognize the grandeur and sublimity of Mr. Rhodes's political ideas. But this neglected development of the ethical side of the man exposes him to the same temptation before which Ignatius Loyola and his followers succumbed. Loyola believed with intense and passionate earnestness in the theory that the Roman Church was the divinely appointed agency for saving the world. To strengthen that church, to extend its dominion, and to suppress all those who rebelled against it, became his supreme morality; and in the attaining of that end the question of means

[1] Sir T. E. Fuller's *Cecil Rhodes: A Monograph*, 1910. A fascinating book.
[2] By the Rev. Donald Macleod in an article in *Good Words*. Dr. Macleod had made a personal investigation into the labour conditions at Kimberley.

became a mere detail. Hence Jesuitism, with its doctrine that the end justifies the means,[1] brought the Society into disrepute, and enormously weakened the influence which it exerted in realizing its ideals. It is just the same with Mr. Rhodes. He is the Loyola of politics. To him the extension of the influence and authority of the English-speaking race and the maintenance of its unity are things which overshadow all other objects. And in attaining that end he is apt to be regardless of the scruples which would weigh with other men.

'Nevertheless, while admitting this sorrowfully and even mournfully, it is well to remember that the extent to which he overstepped the strict rules of right in the case of the Jameson Raid has been enormously exaggerated. That he labours under an undeserved opprobrium, is entirely due to the fact that he was so magnanimous and patriotic that he preferred deliberately to bear the burden of other people's sins, preferring to suffer rather than vindicate himself by letting the whole truth be known. There are few finer spectacles in contemporary politics than the way in which Mr. Rhodes shielded Mr. Chamberlain before the South African Committee. It is true that while he was in Africa he had in unguarded moments blurted out the truth as to the support which he had received from the Colonial Office; but when it came to the point, and he had to choose between giving away a department of the Empire or enduring silently the unjust censure for which his enemies were thirsting, he chose the latter without a murmur.'

* * *

It was from Nordrach – although he talks as though he were still at the Cape – that Garrett, early in December, 1899, wrote as follows to Stead:

'The Rhodes in the *R. of R.'s* was, of course, extremely powerful and original and it's quite possible you, from further away, see him truer on the big lines of truth. For us who see him very close in S.A., your atmosphere of *moral grandeur*, elevation as well as bigness, is very hard to associate with our hero. We see too close, like the valet. He is always surrounded by contemptibles, and they pander; and he insists on taking all men on their lower side. It often revolts me, and,

[1] The Jesuits themselves consistently deny that this is their doctrine. See *The Catholic Encyclopædia*, Vol. XIV, p. 104.

when it does, his word is always "unctuous rectitude." I feel the greatness always better when I'm not in personal contact – for just these reasons . . . of course, I know rectitude is easier on the smaller scale but I can't *revere* a man, though I may admire him, unless I feel that besides being a greater he is a *better* man than myself; and I don't feel that about Rhodes. You do feel that at bottom he is really good: that he loves "righteousness," as the Dutch call it. They will never feel or believe that of him again. We thought they would come round. They never will to him. The rôle you cast him for is impossible.'

This had been Garrett's view of Rhodes throughout his five years' editorship of the *Cape Times* – his view of him, that is to say, from close at hand. 'Close to, at the Cape,' he had written to Stead in July, 1896, 'one can't quite pitch him so high *as a man*; or show his politics as so little drossy in essence. But it is worth anything, I believe, to all of us to have somebody who will publicly say – "I believe in So-and-so's moral nature." I don't quite believe in C. J. R.'s moral nature, but then that prevents me from helping to make it what I should like. I do, of course, believe in some things about him, with all my heart.'

And in January 1898, he had come back to the subject in a somewhat similar strain – Rhodes's health had been causing anxiety.

'We are staking a good bit on Rhodes's cardiac valves, but if I had been in a funk you would have heard long ago. I am far more afraid (in your ear), and so is Milner, of a sort of Kaiser-like *manie des grandeurs*, a sort of fanatical hyperæsthesia of the Ego cuticle, the sort of thing the Greeks said preceded and brought Nemesis, which grows on him – and *may* impair his judgment again as it did in '95–6. Poor old C. J. R.! A big man, among some terribly small ones, and with a petty side, like Napoleon – like *all* big men apparently. This country would be dull without him shoving.'

But Garrett, also, came to see the 'big man' more favourably 'from farther away' – and perhaps to 'see him truer on the big lines of truth.' In the brilliant memoir of Rhodes which he contributed to the *Contemporary Review* for June, 1902, he has much more to say for him. This is generally regarded as the best portrait of Rhodes ever painted and, although it does not hide his faults, the man it shows us

is good as well as great: 'no angel, but a big, rough-grained, strong-headed, great-hearted man.' It bears out almost everything that Stead, in his less carefully chosen words, used to claim for Rhodes: that he was kind and magnanimous and splendidly brave; that his life-work was 'a devouring passion to him,' and that, while he was no ascetic, he was almost like 'one dedicated to an order of working friars' in the intensity of his idealism. Incidentally, the article puts the living man before us with wonderful vividness – 'the leonine head, always looking large even on the large loose-knit body; the light, crisp hair, grizzling fast at the temples, tumbled impatiently on end above the wide and massive forehead . . . the face red, tanned, weather-beaten – an outdoor face; the chin and jaw formidable, except when lit by an attractive, almost boyish, smile; the prominent, light-grey, absent-minded eyes. . . .' We see him and hear him – 'talking, listening; speaking often not to the moment but as one elliptically following worn grooves of solitary thought: conceding "you object very fairly" . . . pouncing, "but I meet you there; the real crux is" so-and-so; appealing, "you catch my thought?"; seeming not to argue but to *think aloud*; without eloquence, without dialectics, without charm, as commonly understood; making admissions, making confidences; insisting, recapitulating, riding a phrase to death, breaking from deep notes into a queer falsetto; but always going to the root of the matter – and often making a conquest by sheer frank force of personality. . . . "It's all right about B." comes the next report in council. "He will come in with me – no, not squared, you're quite wrong – just *on the personal*!" Yes, that was the really formidable Rhodes – the Rhodes who won men not on the purse, but, in his own phrase, "on the personal." '

II

Among Stead's papers have been preserved typewritten records, dictated in his rapid, unstudied way, of a number of talks with Cecil Rhodes. They were, for the most part, long, discursive, intimate talks, not to be turned to account as 'interviews.' Stead drew upon them, of course, from time to time, when discussing Rhodes's achievements and opinions, but a good deal of what follows will be quite new, I think, even to his most constant readers and most intimate friends.

A wide variety of subjects were touched upon in these conversations, and they will furnish, here and there, valuable 'Footnotes to History' to some future chronicler of our times. I shall restrict myself, however, to the passages which bear directly on the friendship between the two men and on the hopes which formed so close a bond between them.

Nearly all their plans and hopes had root in that grandiose idea of a world-wide English-speaking Confederation which pre-occupied them from almost the first hours of their acquaintance in April 1889. The fateful pig-headedness of George III was often the starting-point for their debates. 'To think of the insensate folly of that man!' Rhodes began once at dinner at the Burlington Hotel, his favourite London home, almost as soon as he and his guests – Stead, Sir John Willoughby, Mr. Abe Bailey and two others – had taken their seats at table. 'To think of the insensate folly of that man! And two or three of his advisers were worse than he. But for George III war would have been unknown throughout the world to-day. The English-speaking race would have been reorganized as a unit, with its central Parliament meeting alternately in New York and London, and it would have given peace to the world. There would have been nothing more for Krupp to do or any of your cannon-makers. And to think of all that lost because of the insensate folly of that man!'

A beginning after Stead's own heart! 'Excellent!' he exclaimed, 'All political discussions concerning the Empire ought to begin with a formal anathema upon George III!'

On this particular occasion the talk drifted quickly into a quite different channel. The date was July 19, 1901. The war in South Africa was the burning topic of the moment, and Rhodes's next anathema was for Kruger and Krugerism. After the Transvaal came Rhodesia, and Stead learnt how the problem of religious education had been solved at Bulawayo – a Jew teaching in one schoolroom, a Protestant in another, a Salvationist in a third, the time for instruction being from 8 a.m. to 8.30, and children without a creed of any kind being given an extra lesson in geography. 'It would never do,' explained Rhodes, 'to allow a lad to run wild from 8 to 8.30, throwing up his cap and thanking God he was an atheist!' Whether the Jews believed in a future life, how South Africa could be federated, how soon Canada would become part and parcel of the United States, these and half a dozen other questions then came up in turn for

consideration. On the whole, it was not one of the most memorable, apparently, of the Rhodes dinner-parties, except for the presence of Mr. Abe Bailey, thenceforth a firm friend of Stead's. 'A very straight man,' was Stead's impression of him, 'Straight in face and straight, I should say, in character. His conversation was more interesting than that of anybody else, not even excepting Mr. Rhodes who had not so much new to say.'

The theme of Anglo-American world-predominance is treated of most fully in the first of the conversations, held in Stead's office at Mowbray House in February, 1891. We have seen in Chapter 18 how Stead came to convince himself that the centre of the English-speaking world must presently shift to the United States. He now broaches this bold theory to Rhodes.

'What do you think?' he asks. 'Should we not join the American Republic, the whole of the British Empire being reorganized on the basis of the American Constitution?'

Rhodes – Stead tells us – became rather excited for the moment, then replied:

'How our ideas grow! I take it – I take it! Our two minds are moving exactly alike. I understand you mean to say that if you secured the union of the English-speaking peoples, you would be willing to be annexed to the American Republic. So would I. Dear me, how ideas expand! I thought my ideas were tolerably large, but yours have outgrown them. Yes, yes, you are quite right. For the sake of that great need let us all join the Republic!'

One would have liked to ask Stead what his old father, by this time in Heaven, was disposed to think about the necessity for the proposed amplification of *Pax Britannica*! One cannot read about it without remembering the wise old gentleman's remark to his son, in the early 'seventies, about not encroaching too much on the province of God Almighty!

We need not follow this discourse of Rhodes' any further – it was merely an elaboration in detail of the doctrine implied in these opening sentences and summarized for us by Stead in the passages cited in Chapter 14. From the standpoint of what the two idealists held to be (undeniably) the 'elect race' it was a most inspiring doctrine.

Among the inferior races actually specified by Rhodes in this connection were the French, the Germans, and the Portuguese.

Thinking chiefly of the latter, whose presence in Africa was a perpetual vexation to him, he broke out: 'Do you mean to tell me that any part was left in perpetuity for the pigmies? That these regions have to be peopled by pigmies while a superior race stands multiplying outside? I do not believe it. Our people will never adopt the doctrines of Malthus. They will go on multiplying and probably in 200 years they will fill the whole world. That is what we have to look forward to.'

The Spanish were not mentioned, but one may assume that Rhodes held them in not much higher esteem than the Portuguese, certainly not higher than the French and Germans. And yet, as we have already learnt, it was to a Spaniard he went for inspiration in his chief project for bringing his dream into being – to Loyola. Indeed, even in his everyday life as a practical statesman at the Cape, he tells Stead that he had modelled himself on the Society of Loyola and Francis Xavier. 'In South Africa, I am a Dutchman, remember,' he declares; 'I am all things to all men, I am a Jesuit. As the Jesuits were Chinese in China, so I am a Dutchman in South Africa,' and he proceeds to tell of the University which he is anxious to create in Cape Town. 'Hofmeyr distrusts this,' he says, with a smile. 'He sees possibilities in it. I see possibilities in it also – certainties! I shall have my own rectors and professors, men who will be imbued with the true ideas, men who will widen the outlook of their students.' One can imagine the glow of humorous triumph upon Rhodes's face as he gave out these words. Rhodes's friends describe how, when he was particularly pleased with himself, he used to sit upon his hands and rock his body about like a great schoolboy. Cannot one picture him so now, exulting over his benevolent, but guileful, day-dream – his Jesuitical outwitting of the very estimable but exasperatingly hide-bound Dutch?

The talk concentrated presently upon the Secret Society – the Society of the Elect (Rhodes liked that word) who were to bind themselves to work for the British Empire in the way in which the Jesuits worked for the Church of Rome.

Hitherto, apart from Stead, Rhodes had confided his scheme only to Lord Rothschild and to 'little Johnston.'[1] He had actually made his will, bequeathing his wealth in trust to the former for use in

[1] The term almost always used by Rhodes (as mentioned before) in talking of Mr. H. H. Johnston, not yet Sir Harry.

connection with it. But he had grave misgivings in this connection. Lord Rothschild, he felt, was an excellent man, but entirely lacking in imagination. Rich men of the Rothschild type were to him an object of contemptuous pity. 'Look at the criminal in his cell,' he exclaimed to Stead, 'and at Lord Rothschild! It is hard to say which has the harder lot. The prisoner has some fun, at least, with the spiders and the mice, but look at Rothschild! Out of the 365 days, he spends 300 in turning over bits of paper and marking them. Look at the two men far enough off, so as not to see any difference in clothing, and it will be hard to see any difference between them. Think of that man and his millions – what could he not do with them!'

This by way of preface to what he was now coming to. Stead's *Review of Reviews* and 'Association of Helpers,' he went on, had made a good beginning for the work he had in mind: 'You have got all the ideas, but you require the funds.' In a year or two, the funds should be forthcoming – enough even to buy *The Times*, if necessary. But Lord Rothschild must not be left in sole control of the money. There must be a General of the Society, with powers like those of the General of the Jesuits, and there must be a Committee of three or so. '*You* have the ideas, *you* understand, and little Johnston, *he* knows – what would you say to you and Johnston being associated with Rothschild in this Trust?' Stead feared that Johnston – the right man in other respects – would not be available, being generally away in Africa. Rhodes agreed. Very well, then, let the Trust be vested in Rothschild and Stead alone. Rothschild would not like that, Stead objected laughingly. 'When he reads the will and finds that I am in it also, there will be ructions!'

'Well,' said Rhodes, 'I don't mind. I shall be gone!'

And so it was left. Here, *verbatim*, is Stead's concluding paragraph:

'I telegraphed for Brett, who came two hours later and we had a long talk. The net upshot of which was that the ideal arrangement would be, so far as we could see at present: Rhodes, General of the Society; Stead, Brett, Milner, to be the Junta of three. After Rhodes, Stead to be General, with a third, who might be Rothschild in succession; behind them, Manning, the Booths, little Johnston, Albert Grey, Arthur Balfour, to constitute a circle of Initiates. The Association of Helpers to be developed. A College, say under Professor Seeley, to be

established to train people in the English-speaking idea. Brett thought that some money should be in at once – not much, but some.'

The sequel is told on May 5, 1891, Stead having had meanwhile a second talk with Rhodes and one with Milner, recently home from Egypt, who is 'filled with admiration' and full of enthusiasm for the scheme: Milner himself, it seems, had cherished a somewhat similar project for a band of Companions of St. George. Rhodes, before leaving for Cape Town, had looked in one evening at Mowbray House, whence, he said, he was going direct to his lawyer, Mr. Hawkesley, having altered his will, as he had said he would, and left the whole of his fortune to Lord Rothschild and Stead together – Stead to be considered by Lord Rothschild as the representative of his ideas, and the money to be utilized in accordance with Stead's views. But while thus providing for the possibility of his death, Rhodes declared he was 'very strong' and quite hoped and expected to be able to control his fortune himself. 'He seemed very well pleased with himself,' Stead records in conclusion; 'said he had seen everybody and had worked like a galley-slave.'

There we may leave the matter. All that there remains to tell about it has been told fully in Stead's book, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil Rhodes*. From that last will Rhodes removed Stead's name because, as he said, of his 'extraordinary eccentricity,' a phrase covering Stead's two besetting sins in his friend's eyes – his pro-Boer partisanship, chiefly, but also, in some degree, his obsession with spooks.

The Secret Society was still-born. The Rhodes Scholarships idea, conceived at about the same time, shows every sign of immortality. Rhodes and Stead had often discussed it in the 'nineties, but it was not until April 10, 1900, that the provisions to be incorporated in the trust deed were finally decided on. Rhodes invited Stead to dinner – again at the Burlington – to discuss the matter with himself and his solicitor, Mr. Hawkesley. But Stead's account of that evening's conversation contains little that has not been told already a score of times, by himself or by Rhodes's biographers or by the actual terms of the Rhodes Scholarship Trust. We all remember how Rhodes approached the subject – his determination not to let the scholarships go to mere bookworms. The 'smug' element, as he called it (including Greek and Latin scholarship), might stand for four-tenths in the

selection of his scholars, but 'brutality' (by which he meant only manliness, with perhaps horse-sense) should stand for two-tenths. 'Then there is tact and leadership, again two-tenths. That makes up the whole. You see how it works?'

Stead urged that tact and leadership should count for more and scholarship for less, but both Rhodes and Hawkesley were against him. Eventually a compromise was agreed to, these two elements being made to stand each for three-tenths. It may be noted that when he was thus bequeathing his millions Rhodes had practically no ready money. Stead had called him 'the Millionaire without a sixpence.' 'Quite true!' Rhodes replied, 'I never have a bob. At this present moment my account at the bank is overdrawn £70,000. Never a bob! But my money is all right. Don't be afraid; it won't fail.'

While concerned mostly with problems and projects and big ideas, these talks turned of course upon persons now and again. Lord Milner's name recurs repeatedly, Stead condemning his South African policy, Rhodes defending and praising him. 'I have the greatest possible regard for Milner, but I have seen very little of him,' he declared that same evening. 'He said to me, "The less you and I are seen together the better." Hence I never invited him to Groote Schuur.' The war had been Milner's war, he added, not Chamberlain's – Chamberlain had been strong against it. This led to the usual wrangle, Stead deploring the war, Rhodes justifying it and accusing Stead of insubordination – the kind of insubordination, he complained, which he had always seen in the way of their Secret Society. 'Yes, insubordination,' he insisted. 'Now here we are, your three boys, Garrett, Milner and myself. We are all your boys and we are on the spot, and we all agree that a certain course is necessary and instead of your accepting our authority, we being on the spot, being your boys, nothing will satisfy you but to go off on your own line and oppose us!' If it had been a social question at home in which Stead had been interested, he, Rhodes, even if he had thought Stead quite wrong, would have said to himself, 'No, that's no business of mine – he says it *is* so,' and would have backed Stead up.

Here Stead tried to get a word in.

'Let me have my say!' Rhodes went on, 'I am going to get my talk in before you!' – but (so Stead describes him) quite genial and jolly and smiling and without a trace of bitterness. 'Take, for instance, America. I read your book on Chicago. That tells me what America

is. I would not set myself against you, because you have been there. Now in Africa *we* have been there. Why should you set yourself against us?'

'You see,' Stead replied, 'it is my misfortune to have been brought up in African politics by a certain Cecil John Rhodes and he taught me certain principles in relation to Africa which I cannot abandon even if Mr. Rhodes now tells me to do so!'

'That's all right,' said Rhodes, 'but you must remember, things have changed.'

'Yes,' persisted Stead, 'but you have always taught me that the fundamental principle of British policy in South Africa was to rely upon the Dutch and now you are making war on the Dutch and I cannot have it.'

And so the friendly dispute would continue.

Stead was to have two later meetings with Rhodes; but, in subsequent years, when recalling his friend, his mind will have gone back oftenest, I imagine, to that evening at the Burlington Hotel in April 1900. Few things in his life can have touched him more than Rhodes's magnanimous farewell to him, as he and his fellow-guest were leaving. He records the incident very simply:

'Then he took me with both hands, more like the way Canon Liddon used to do – Mr. Hawkesley declared afterwards that he thought we were going to kiss each other. And he said: "Now, my dear Stead, remember that even if you should feel that it was your duty to attack me, no matter what you might say, it will make no difference to our friendship. We are much too good friends, and I owe you so much for what you have taught me that I never could allow anything like that to come between us."

' "Thank you," I said. "Mr. Rhodes, I sincerely hope I shall never have to attack you. Good-bye. God bless you!" '

# CHAPTER 26

# THE YEAR 1903

## I

### MR. MOREL'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONGO SLAVERY: STEAD TAKES A HAND

EARLY in 1903 Stead's active co-operation was secured for a crusade which soon riveted the attention of the whole world – Mr. E. D. Morel's crusade against slavery in the so-called Congo Free State.

Before the Arab penetrated into the Congo region from the east, and the European from the west, the condition of the inhabitants had been one of absolute savagery, and it was still appalling when, in 1876, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, took the initiative in convening a conference of the Powers at Brussels to consider the subject from the standpoint of philanthropy and of civilization. The Arabs, according to Sir Harry Johnston, an accepted authority on African affairs, had wrought great improvements, doing 'much to suppress cannibalism and to introduce a far higher standard of comfort.[1] But they had prosecuted a ruthless slave-trade and the country stood in dire need of administration by an enlightened and benevolent ruler.

By one of life's bitterest ironies, such a ruler was thought to have been found in King Leopold. In England especially was this the feeling. 'Every one who was anyone in the Missionary world,' Sir Harry Johnston reminds us, 'or in that section of London society devoted to philanthropic ideals (such as the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Albert, Earl Grey, Cardinal Manning, Sir Harry Verney, Sir William MacKinnon) decried any attempt on the part of Great Britain to import base commercial considerations into the political settlement of Equatorial Africa and hailed King Leopold as the man who would gradually raise the millions of Central African negroes to a condition of peaceable self-government, free, on the one hand, from the curse of the Arab, and on the other from the alcoholizing Englishman.' The King of the Belgians stood forward as the champion of what was best in European civilization 'and of all that was to regenerate this vast region of potential wealth.'

[1] Introduction to E. D. Morel's *Red Rubber*.

The Congo Free State, entrusted to King Leopold's hands in 1885, became very soon a great field for Christian Missionaries, especially English, and throughout the 'nineties – despite occasional disturbing rumours – the impression prevailed generally that King Leopold's promises were being fulfilled. Thus in 1897 Sir Hugh Gilzean Reid, the founder and first President of the Institute of Journalists, an ardent supporter of the Baptist Missionary Society, was able, in a character-sketch of Baron Van Etvelde, Chief Secretary of the Congo Free State, to write:

'It would not be fitting to comment here on all the controversies that have arisen with reference to the Congo Free State. Suffice to say that the King and his colleagues have ever striven to carry out the conditions of free labour, fair wages, equal justice to all sections, and constitutional Government, on which it was established: that over nearly two-thirds of the nine hundred thousand square miles multitudes of natives have been brought under the influence of Christian teaching, inhuman customs abolished, and that the "fall" has been well-nigh completed of the Arab raiders who for centuries invaded the territory, killing the men, making slaves of the women and children, and stealing the fruits of native industry. It will take time to accomplish all; but the civilizing work goes forward with steadily increasing impetus and facility: and it may be confidently predicted that within a short period Belgium will possess a vast and prosperous Colony in Africa.'

Stead, who was an old friend of Sir Hugh Gilzean Reid's, and who knew him to be a man of high repute, was glad to print the character-sketch in question in the *Review of Reviews*, and did so without questioning these claims.

It was Mr. E. D. Morel who opened Stead's eyes to the real truth of the matter.

I need not describe how, in the early 'nineties, Mr. Morel, then a young clerk in the service of Elder Dempster & Co., working alternately at Liverpool, Antwerp and Brussels, came to acquire bit by bit a mass of convincing evidence as to the abuses in the Congo State, vague reports of which had previously been coming to England, and how in 1898 he resigned his appointment in order to have a free hand in coping with the tremendous scandal which he had already begun to expose. The whole story is very effectively told in his bio-

graphy by Mr. Seymour Cocks, published in 1920. Suffice it here to say that in a series of articles in the *Speaker* he revealed some of his discoveries, and that this brought him into touch with Mr. Fox Bourne, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, and Sir Charles Dilke, who had begun two years previously to urge upon the British Government the need of inquiries into the whole question of King Leopold's rule. It was in April 1903 that Morel founded the weekly journal, the *African Mail*, which henceforward was the principal organ of the movement.

Stead preserved an immense mass of letters bearing upon the Congo – they bear witness to the astounding energy with which he threw himself into anything of the kind. Morel and Gilzean Reid were among his chief correspondents and it is very interesting to see how these two wrestled for Stead's support.

Gilzean Reid and Stead had been in correspondence on the Congo problem since 1896 – Stead suspicious and anxious, Gilzean Reid confident and dogmatic, and overflowing always with admiration for King Leopold. 'He is a man of strong faith and lofty ideals,' Stead is told in September of that year, 'and will live to vindicate his aims and administration.' Gilzean Reid has 'a charming portrait' of the King, presented to him personally, which he would like Stead to reproduce in the *Review of Reviews*. Stead consents, and the portrait duly appears with highly laudatory letterpress from Gilzean Reid's own pen. Not until October 1902 do the correspondents really come to grips. Stead by this time has begun to hear from Morel and he has written to Gilzean Reid 'a characteristically frank but rather surprising letter,' as that gentleman describes it in his somewhat agitated reply: a long communication, this reply of sixteen pages, for the most part a fresh panegyric upon Leopold. If he held a brief from the sovereign of the Congo, he declares, he would follow up, expose and exterminate 'the hired slanderers' whom Stead has cited. He (Gilzean Reid) is proud to reflect that he has been so long permitted to share modestly in vindicating what would presently be recognized as 'one of the most daring, well-directed and successful civilizing and industrial efforts' the world had ever seen.

This is Gilzean Reid's tone throughout, and Stead long remains sceptical of Morel's statements, but gradually the endless stream of ascertained facts and irrefutable arguments have their effect, and at last, in an article entitled 'Cannibal Christendom in South Africa,'

in the *Review of Reviews* for March 1893, he proclaims himself a convert.

Taking as his text two works upon the subject which had just been published, Morel's *Affairs of West Africa* and Fox Bourne's *Civilization in Congoland*, Stead sets himself to awaken the conscience of the country. Perhaps a thousand or two persons had as yet bought the volumes – hundreds of thousands of startled men and women throughout the British Empire were now to read these arresting sentences:

'Mr. Fox Bourne's book *Civilization in Congoland*, is sickening reading. Its proper title is *The Cannibal State on the Congo*. Its contents, taken together with those in which Mr. Morel attacks the system of chartered monopolies, are enough to make one despair of humanity. Sir H. Gilzean Reid and Mr. Demetrius Boulger would have us believe that King Leopold has converted the Congo Valley into a terrestrial paradise. Mr. Morel and Mr. Fox Bourne maintain that he has converted it into a Hell; and after making all allowances it is difficult to resist the conviction that they have proved their case.'

Stead goes on to retell the dreadful story. Many of us have forgotten even its essential features and it may be well to recall them as here summarized. He has cited a detailed description of the *chicotte*, the terrible whip of raw hippo-hide 'used to persuade the miserable native that it is to his interest to work for the white men.' Stead proceeds:

'The chicotte, however, is only brought into requisition after the natives have been broken in. The process of breaking them in is more summary, and involves the employment of the soldier.

'Before explaining the *modus operandi* it may be well to state how the Belgians obtain the force necessary to enable them to eat up whole populations. For in the Congo State in 1902 the total 1,465 were Belgians, who held all the important military and civil positions. As the native population of Congoland numbers some twenty or thirty millions, it is curious to discover how such a handful of whites can reduce the black millions to virtual slavery. The trick is not very difficult. A white officer with a few armed men at his back summons the chiefs in a district to a palaver. Each chief is asked, in return for so many pocket-handkerchiefs, to furnish a certain number of slaves,

If he agrees the slaves of the black chief become the slaves of the white officer, who subjects them to military discipline, arms them with rifles, and uses them to punish any chief who is slow in supplying his quantum of slaves. Refusal to furnish the stipulated contingent is treated as an act of war. The villages of the recalcitrants are burnt down, their stores looted, their gardens destroyed, and the natives themselves shot down until they have had enough of it and submit to escape extermination. Their submission is accepted on the condition they supply double the contingents of slaves first asked for. The slaves thus handed over are first called Liberes, then put in arms until their bondage can be riveted with military discipline in the nearest camp. As every district officer receives two pounds head money for every slave thus enrolled in the *force publique*, the state found little difficulty in organizing a standing army of slaves, nominally free, but absolutely at the disposal of the State, which now numbers 15,000 men. To a native African this *force publique* is the irresistible power which renders impossible any resistance to the Belgian vampire which is draining the life blood of Congoland. Having obtained this *force publique* and supplemented it by enrolling thousands of cannibal tribes as an irregular militia, the State and the monopolist companies are ready for action. What takes place has been minutely described by many witnesses, among whom Mr. Sjöblom, a Swedish missionary, is one of the best. When the apparatus of coercion is ready for action the natives are summoned to the headquarters and ordered to bring a certain minimum quantity of indiarubber every Sunday. If they refuse, some of them are shot, to encourage the others, and the rest are driven into the bush to collect the rubber. If they do not return, or if the tale of rubber baskets fall short, war is declared. Says Mr. Sjöblom:

'The soldiers are sent in different directions. The people in the towns are attacked, and when they are running away into the forest, and try to hide themselves and save their lives, they are found out by the soldiers. Then their gardens of rice are destroyed, and their supplies taken. Their plantains are cut down while they are young and not in fruit, and often their huts are burnt, and, of course, everything of value is taken. Within my own knowledge forty-five villages were altogether burnt down.' – *Civilization in Congoland*, p. 211.

'Where the natives submit in despair, every male native is driven

into the marshes every morning by savages armed with rifles, who are established as absolute despots in the town. If any native man stays behind he is shot at sight. During the day the sentinel does as he pleases with the women and the property of the poor wretches who are toiling to collect the rubber. If at week-end the full quantity of rubber is not forthcoming, the defaulters are in some cases chicotted, in others they are killed, and their right hands are hacked off, smoke-dried, and sent down with the rubber baskets to explain why the weekly output was short. "We counted," said Mr. Sjöblom on one occasion, "eighteen hands smoked, and from the size of the hands we could judge that they belonged to men, women and children." On another occasion, 160 hands were brought in. Sometimes the hands were hewn from living bodies.

'This horrible picture of civilization in Congoland would not be complete without some reference to the veritable cannibalism which the Congo State is spreading all over the country which the king was to reclaim for civilization and humanity. The camp followers and friendlies, the irregular levies, who are armed and employed by the state to supplement the *force publique*, have introduced cannibalism into regions where it was before unknown. "Races who until lately do not seem to have been cannibals have learned to eat human flesh." Cannibalism in West Africa is no mere ceremonial. It is part of the commissariat of the Congo forces. Dr. Hinds, in his book on *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*, states that after the burning down of the town of Nyanwe in 1893,

'Every one of the cannibals had at least one body to eat. All the meat was cooked and smoke-dried and formed provisions for the whole of his force and for all the camp-followers for many days afterwards. . . . In the night following a battle or the storming of a town these human wolves disposed of all the dead, leaving nothing even for the jackals, and thus saved us, no doubt, from many an epidemic.' – *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*, pp. 156–7.

'After this description of Christian cannibalism by proxy, it is hardly necessary to fill in pitiful details of the cruel slavery enforced upon old women and women with children, beaten and ill-used by their savage guards, under the eyes of white officers.'

This article was Stead's first blow in the great fight. He followed

it up with many others and enlisted the co-operation of many of his friends. In May he issued a pamphlet on the Congo in support of a motion on the subject introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Herbert Samuel,[1] and supported by Mr. Alfred Emmott, M.P.,[2] Sir John Gorst and others: 'the pamphlet was of the greatest possible service,' Mr. Samuel wrote to him the day after, 'it was in evidence constantly during the debate.' In June, Stead returned to the charge with an unsparing 'character-sketch' of King Leopold. We can understand how welcome were his efforts to the protagonists in the fray. 'When I felt I had won you over,' Morel wrote to him on May 22, the day after the carrying of Mr. Samuel's motion in Parliament, 'I felt I had done the best day's work since starting the palaver – some four or five years ago. It was a great triumph for me and a hard task. I do take credit for that! But I shan't forget, and I am sure no one will forget, how you flung yourself into the fray – once you were convinced – and what a powerful lever that has been. You have taken up a lot of things in your day. I don't think you have ever taken up anything out of which greater ultimate good will come than this. And I do sincerely hope you will go on helping: hotly and strongly. The first victory has been won, but we are a long way off the goal yet.'

## II

### STEAD AND INDIA

Stead's active interest in the affairs of India may be dated from the beginning of 1891, when an urgent appeal to him was made by Mr. William Digby, an Anglo-Indian publicist, well known for his sympathy with the native races. 'You have been directing your attention to the submerged tenth of England,' Mr. Digby wrote to Stead on January 10 of that year, shortly after the appearance of General Booth's famous book. 'May I, with all the force I possess, beg you to give a little of your attention to the submerged nine-tenths of India? The three millions submerged in England, thanks to you as much as to anybody, are receiving attention from many people. The submerged tens of millions in India are receiving no adequate attention or consideration.' It was in Stead's power, he

[1] Later the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Samuel.
[2] Later Lord Emmott.

went on to urge, 'more perhaps than the power of any other man connected with journalism, to do the Indian people effectual service.'

A fortnight later, Mr. Digby returns to the charge with the following letter – it is typical of the way in which advocates of unpopular causes used constantly to invoke Stead's championship :

'Sunday afternoon,
25. 1. '91.

'DEAR MR. STEAD,

'I have just finished reading your article on Dean Church in the current No. of the *R. of R.* I rise from its perusal with the unspoken question on my lips: "Why is it Stead treats the Indian problem with such scorn and contempt?" I have asked myself that question twenty times. I am as far from the answer now as I ever was. "Fifty thousand men are lying dead in the East at this hour," was a spectacle which, in 1877, moved you to the quick. In that same year, and a part of the next, *five millions* of your fellow-subjects were lying dead in India – men, women, and children, slain by a worse than bashi-bazouk or Tartar, slain by slow starvation! The year before last 20,000 of your fellow-subjects died in a district not so large as East Anglia, slain by slow starvation! During the past eight years there have been *four millions and a half of excess deaths* from fever (euphemism for insufficient food and clothing): these four millions and a half were your fellow-subjects. The condition of things which brought this about is going on unremedied. You have paid no heed to any of these things. You do not even acknowledge communications addressed to you. God forgive you! I can't.

'Here, in the Indian problem, are the conditions which should powerfully appeal to *you*. All that Lowell writes in his inspired poems finds realization in the Indian difficulties. You are very busy. That might be an excuse for some men. It is none for you.

'Unlike other enterprises, however, in which you have been engaged, there are no Cardinals, or Bishops or Deans; no Earls and Peeresses, in the Indian Reform interest. Everyone of those is arrayed on the other side. All the more reason why you should do what you can on behalf of the humble and few reformers. Your British 'submerged tenth' is paralleled by many tenths among British India's two hundred millions. In Britain the few suffer: in India the many, while Britain

prospers on the suffering of that many. Where are your "God's Englishmen" that Christian England should have brought about in India the state of things which exists there?

'Sincerely yours,

'WM. DIGBY.'

These two communications were, of course, bound to have their effect, and, as it happened, there was in progress that year a movement which in any case would have had swift response from Stead – Mr. B. M. Malabari's agitation against infant marriage in India. Stead supported it with all his heart and both in public utterances and private letters to the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, and from this moment he may fairly be counted among India's most vigilant friends in England. Already in December 1891, we find Mr. Malabari exerting himself to make the *Review of Reviews* known among his countrymen.

In every subsequent volume of the *Review* throughout the 'nineties, India was kept well to the fore, but it was not until ten years later that Stead came into really close relations with the Indian Nationalists. In December 1901, at the request of Mr. Malabari, he contributed to *East and West* a very striking article entitled, 'What is my duty to the People of India?' The article begins thus:

'I am an Englishman. Before I was born, a series of actions, diplomatic, political and commercial, for which I had no responsibility, resulted in the establishment of the British sovereignty over Hindustan. When I was a small child, this sovereignty was definitely acquired by the British Empire. Since I have attained to manhood, no step has been taken which materially affected the *status quo* which was established before my birth. I have therefore been born into a condition in which without my consent I find myself a director in an Imperial Part which is the supreme authority over a country I have never visited, whose populations are of different civilization, religion and social organization from those in which I live. What then is my duty to these vast millions of my brothers and sisters? It is an important question, the full discussion of which would occupy much more space than you can afford me, and therefore I can but indicate in the vaguest outline certain considerations which will I hope enable your readers to understand something of the point of view of an English Liberal at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

'The first consideration, dominating all others, is the duty of recognizing that these immense masses of humanity are composed of our own brothers and sisters, each of whom is our equal in the eye of the Almighty. Not only so, but the differences which divide and cause us to be in a position of political ascendancy are trivial compared with the points upon which we are at one. Hence our first duty is to oppose all those suggestions of race and pride and arrogance which are so potent in building impassable barriers to the quick and constant flow of human sympathy between the white-skinned Lords of India and those millions who bear upon their features the impression of a fiercer sun than that which beats upon our temperate isle.

'The second consideration is that, although we were born in a position of political superiority, we have neither the knowledge nor the local acquaintance with circumstances which alone can justify men in forming a definite judgment as to what is right and just. It behoves us, therefore, to be very humble and cautious, and to recognize that we are tolerably certain to make blunders at every step. Our duty, therefore, towards our Indian fellow-subjects, should be that of respectful learners, who require to be taught by the people whom they govern as to the methods by which their needs can be best satisfied. Before venturing to form a judgment of our own we ought to be very careful to learn the facts.

'The third great principle is that our ultimate idea ought to be to make ourselves unnecessary. As a father endeavours to make his son an independent man, so English dominion in India ought to have as its ultimate aim the establishment of the principle of self-government among the millions who inhabit Hindustan. The realization of that ideal may be a long way off, but it is the ultimate goal which must never be lost sight of; and we shall be judged in history by the success with which we have trained, educated, and accustomed our Indian fellow-subjects to take upon their own shoulders the burden and responsibility of government.'

Having formulated these three principles as governing our responsibilities, Stead asks the further question: How can we best help India? The great curse of India is excessive expenditure, he declares, especially military expenditure, which is largely due to Russophobia. Hence the most practical manner in which we can work towards relieving the pressure upon the Indian taxpayer is to combat with

all our energy the doctrine of the Russophobists, and to promote good relations between Russia and Great Britain. The second method of helping India is to combat, as if it were the very incarnation of Satan, the spread of race pride, which disgraces so many Anglo-Indians of the baser sort. We see a great deal of the same pestilent class-spirit in our own country, where poisonous social relationships continually impede co-operation in good works. The third way in which it is possible for us to help is by constantly thinking, saying and writing what is the truth concerning the debt which we owe to the great sages and poets and philosophers of India who have done so much to spiritualize the existence of the Indian peoples. To one who is buried deep in the dense imperialism of the West there is a certain majesty in the spectacle which we see in the Far East of whole races to whom the world of thought is the only real world and the world in which we live is regarded as a passing shadow.

The article concludes as follows:

'As a journalist I have too often failed in my duty to India. Out of sight is often out of mind. The pressing demands of an importunate beggar at the door will often prevent your listening to the great chorus of myriad voices in the far distance. But with all shortcomings which I do frankly and sorrowfully confess, I do feel that I can make an honest confession and say that according to my light, so far as I have had opportunity, I have endeavoured to minimize what seemed to me the inevitable evils of such a position as that which we occupy in India, and have endeavoured also to promote, so far as I could in my small way, the feeling of mutual self-respect, sympathy and fraternity between my own countrymen and my fellow-subjects in India.'

In February, 1902, Stead brought Indian affairs into the limelight with a thoroughness and effectiveness all his own. Mr. William Digby had just issued a large volume entitled '*Prosperous*' *British India*, altogether too bulky and cumbrous to reach a wide public, but sensational in some of its descriptions of Indian misery, and in the challenging terms in which the author dedicated it to the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton. It had attracted comparatively little notice in the Daily Press, but Stead was determined that it should not be left ignored, and bracketed it ingeniously with Kipling's poem, 'The Islanders,' as 'The Topic of the Month' in his Review.

Stead describes 'The Islanders' as mere 'vigorous doggerel,' worthy

of 'the Banjo Bard of the Empire,' but he welcomes it as helping to emphasize the dangers of Chamberlainism. 'Kipling, from his point of view, is right,' he declares. 'His message in "The Islanders" is a savage warning that unless the nation adopts conscription it is doomed to perish.' Kipling is right, because conscription is the logical corollary of Chamberlainism. 'If this nation is to place its destinies in the hands of a Colonial Secretary who never opens his mouth without insulting the great military nations of the Continent, and if the whole of the resources of the Empire are to be consumed in the prosecution of a war of extermination in South Africa, then the sooner we adopt conscription the better.' And, with immense gusto, Stead employs the Banjo Bard of the Empire to belabour Mr. Hugh Price Hughes and the perverted Radicals who have supported the War!

Having thus captured the attention of his readers, Stead proceeds to discourse to them on the sombre and unpalatable subject of Mr. Digby's book. Recalling first that very different utterance of Kipling, 'The White Man's Burden,' with its noble exposition of a really worthy Imperialism, the kind of Imperialism which he himself has been preaching all his life, he comes to the case of India. Hitherto he has felt that in India, at least, British rule has been a blessing, yet here comes Mr. William Digby with his portentous indictment. Is Mr. Digby right? 'If he is right,' Stead continues, 'instead of filling full the mouth of famine and bidding the plague to cease, instead of acting as a terrestrial providence, saving the people from the consequences of their own ignorance and sloth, we stand accused of being little short of an infernal vampire, the net effect of whose rule has been to multiply the frequency of famine and to reduce the resources of the whole or a very large part of India by fifty per cent. Clearly, if Mr. Digby is right, then we have no right to continue in control of the destinies of Hindustan and the bottom is knocked out of our Imperialism.'

Recoiling from such a conclusion, Stead had addressed a circular letter to some three-score of the foremost Anglo-Indians in the country, asking them for their views on the subject. The replies were numerous and most interesting – the House of Commons, one reflects, had seldom, if ever, the benefit of so informing a debate on India. According to Sir George Birdwood, Sir Auckland Colvin, Sir Lepel Griffin, Sir Richard Temple and all the other official Anglo-Indians with the sole exception of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Digby's

statements were exaggerated and untrustworthy. So they seemed also to Mr. A. P. Sinnett, the Theosophist, an ex-editor of the great Indian newspaper, the *Pioneer*, of Allahabad. Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., on the other hand, agreed with Sir William Wedderburn in taking the opposite view. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji wrote:

'You ask me "Whether there is any justification whatever for his (Mr. Digby's) assertion that the net effect of British rule has been to impoverish India?"

'I am very sorry to say Mr. Digby is justified in his assertion that the net effect of British rule has been to impoverish our subjects, and to render famine chronic.'

It is an immense theme, this question of the governance of India – Stead could not hope to do more than draw attention to it for a moment. But the bold and open-minded spirit in which he took it up and insisted upon its discussion won him the intense gratitude of all Indian nationalists, and in June 1903, they gave expression to this gratitude by inviting him to preside at the assembly of the Indian National Congress to be held at Madras in the following December. 'Although Congress Presidents are usually Indians,' Sir William Wedderburn explained in a letter urging the acceptance of this invitation, 'exceptions are occasionally made, as in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh.' It was a tempting proposal for one of Stead's sympathies and temperament, but Mrs. Stead was ill and the affairs of the *Review of Reviews* were still suffering from the War. There were political considerations also to be weighed carefully. Having become convinced against his will that the British Empire in India was little better than a vampire, instead of being the 'beneficent Providence' he had formerly proclaimed it to be, he would have, he felt, to appear before the Congress in 'sackcloth and ashes.' He might be moved to express himself with passion, and his words might be firebrands, kindling dissatisfaction which might lead to an increase rather than an alleviation of the sufferings of the people. He did not like to incur any such risk unless he were prepared to stay in India and take his chances with the unfortunate people who might be incited by his words. He explained all this to Mr. Romesh Dutt and Mr. Naoroji, who had placed the proposition before him. They tried to overrule his objections, but in vain. Nor was he able to decide otherwise when, in 1907, the invitation was renewed.

Natives of India will feel that these two pages do but scant justice to what Stead's efforts on their behalf achieved for them. The limits of my space will debar allusion to his many bold incursions into Indian politics during the years that followed. I shall conclude this section by citing some evidently heartfelt words written to Stead by Mr. Bipin Chandara Pal in January 1911, the month in which the 'coming of age' of the *Review of Reviews* was celebrated. After declaring that he remembers the day on which the *Review* came into existence, Mr. Bipin Chandara Pal proceeds:

'We journalists in India welcomed it, perhaps, more heartily than anyone else. The editorial sanctum in India means, oftentimes, a dingy room, a deal-wood packing-case doing duty for a table, and for a library an ordinary English dictionary. We are too poor to subscribe to newspapers and magazines. To us, therefore, your *Review of Reviews*, placing us in direct touch with the moving thought of the modern world, came as a godsend. The number of your subscribers may not be very large, but I can assure you that the influence of your paper is very considerable among my English-educated countrymen, who have always appreciated your generous sympathies with Indian aspirations, and I may well take the liberty of offering you, on their behalf as well as mine, our heartiest congratulations and good wishes on this occasion. I hope and trust that it may be given to you and to your paper to help the cause of peaceful progress towards national autonomy in India in the same way as you did in regard to South Africa.'

## III

### RETROSPECTIVE

In the *Review of Reviews* for December 1903, Stead indulged in a brief retrospect over his record for the previous fourteen years. On the whole he was well satisfied with it. Above all, he took credit to himself for having done his best for the cause of Peace. He confessed to the loss of one great illusion – he felt he had placed too much reliance upon the English-speaking peoples: his visits to the Continent had enlarged his vision and had convinced him that there was no one race marked out unmistakably for the leadership of the world; and we have seen how he lost faith in England's mission as ruler of India. In his other judgments he saw little to recant.

Peace and the hope of universal brotherhood were the themes uppermost in his mind just then, and he made no allusion to many of the matters which had called forth his greatest energies, nor shall I attempt even to catalogue them here. And yet some of the struggles in which he took so prominent a part, and some of the projects he tried to launch, counted for a good deal in his life – his unceasing efforts, for instance, on behalf of Henniker Heaton's postal reform, his support of the Progressives in London's municipal politics, his frustrated endeavours to create a 'Civic Church,' [1] his 'Wake Up, England,' articles, etc., etc. Many of Stead's appearances as biographer and critic during this period were also of interest. A book which he produced on Queen Victoria and her reign in 1897 gave intense pleasure to an extraordinarily large audience. An interview with Boss Croker, of Tammany disrepute, also in that year, was a journalistic masterpiece; the portion of it containing Mr. Croker's memorable confession that, looking back upon his whole life, he could not think of any single action of his that he had any reason to regret, was copied into, and discussed by, almost every newspaper in the British Empire and America. There were some half-dozen book reviews which became the talk of the town. Who that read them does not remember Stead's onslaught on *The Christian* of Hall Caine and his analysis of Miss Marie Corelli's *Barabbas*? A curious little collection of letters to Stead from famous authors whose books he praised or blamed will one day be at the disposal of some literary historian. Among those who have most reason to be grateful to him

[1] Stead wrote scores of articles and delivered scores of addresses on the subject of what he called the 'Civic Church.' In the *Review of Reviews* for September 1896, he thus summarized his idea:

'The principle of the Civic Church, I need hardly remind our readers, is in its essence nothing more than this, *viz.*: Get the best men on both sides together, and let them draw up a programme which may be regarded as the irreducible minimum of what ought to be done. That there is such a consensus of opinion upon all questions that agitate the nations is a faith that has nowhere been preached more sedulously than in these pages. It is the only true way in which we can arrive at the Catholic faith, it is the modern variant of the old ecclesiastical saying which was held everywhere in all time by all believers.' This passage came in an extremely appreciative account of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Horace Plunkett's 'Recess Committee,' in which representatives of all shades of Irish opinion had met together to discuss plans for improving the industrial and agricultural condition of the country; one of the happiest events in the modern history of Ireland, and, as Stead held, a practical illustration of his 'Civic Church' in being.

for quick appreciation and warm encouragement were writers so dissimilar as Madame Sarah Grand and Mr. H. G. Wells and Miss Elizabeth Robins. In his attitude towards books Stead was as courageous as he was in regard to other matters, and he was frequently up in arms on behalf of venturesome women condemned by Pharisaical male critics. 'Victoria Cross' owed largely to him the success of her first novel, *Anna Lombard*; and Mrs. Maud Churton Braby's *Downward*, although admired by critics so discriminating as Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Charles Marriott, would probably have succumbed to stupid condemnation but for Stead's warm words in its defence.

* * *

One very important development of the *Review of Reviews* may perhaps be dealt with here, although it was in an earlier retrospect, entitled 'After Seven Years,' and printed in the issue for January 1897, that Stead himself had most to say about it: namely the publication of his 'Masterpiece Library.' Here is his own record of the starting of this venture:

'The great idea of the *Review of Reviews* has been to democratize the best thought of the world. Carlyle long ago said that anyone who had a sixpence was sovereign lord and emperor over all that that sixpence will purchase. The *Review of Reviews* extended the sovereignty of the sixpence in the realm of literature farther than it had ever been extended before. But the *Review of Reviews* of necessity confined itself to periodical literature, and the movement of the world from day to day. In the last two years I have been able to extend the range of this principle of literary democratization by bringing within its sweep a literature not of to-day, but of all the yesterdays, so as to render available for the poorest English-speaking man the best thoughts which the greatest thinkers expressed in the purest style since our language first was fashioned. The publication of the Masterpiece Library may be regarded as an offshoot from the *Review of Reviews*, which for range and utility almost rivals the growth of the parent tree. I began the publication of the Penny Classics for the People with the publication of Lord Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" as the first number of an edition of Penny Poets. The success that attended this venture was signal and immediate. I followed up the publication of the 'Lays' by a series of weekly

To my Readers. Programme and Principles

I Programme.

Of the making of magazines there is no end. There are already more periodicals than any one can find time to read. That is why I have today added another to the list. For the new comer is not a rival but rather an index and a guide to all those already in existence, & so far from seeking to gain circulation at the cost of others the object of this new venture will be to advertise all the older monthlies and to promote their welfare by calling attention to the articles with which they are filled. In the mighty maze of modern periodical literature, the busy man wanders confused, not knowing where to find the precise article that he requires and fearing often to bring all his scanty time in the search he departs unsatisfied. Hence the object of the Sixpenny Monthly to supply a clue to that maze. in the shape of a readable compendium of all the best articles in the magazines and reviews. However short of the ideal the performance may come, my aim is simple. I shall try to help the busy man to find quickly what he wants in the periodicals of the month. and I will try to give my readers some general idea of the drift and character of the more important articles in the monthlies of England, Europe and America.

AN EXAMPLE OF W. T. STEAD'S HANDWRITING

Facsimile of the first page of the MS. of his "Address" to readers of the *Review of Reviews*, Number 1.

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numbers until I had placed all the masterpieces of English Poetry in the possession of the penny public. I think that I may say without boasting, that I circulated more poetry of the first class in the twelve months during which the Penny Poets were running than had ever been circulated by any publisher in the English language. I cannot but believe that the injection of so vast a body of the best English poetry into the mind of the English-speaking people will bear good results in the years that are to come. After the first forty-eight numbers were published in the weekly issue, I confined the publication of the poets to one per month. Of the Penny Poets there have been printed up to date no fewer than 5,000,000 in round numbers; the exact figures at the moment of writing are 4,955,932.'

Among these booklets there was one 'double number,' No. 51, devoted to 'Hymns that have Helped,' a selection made from five languages, and including the Marseillaise! It was an immense success.

When the weekly issue of the Penny Poets came to an end, Stead followed it up with an edition of condensed novels at the same price, beginning with Rider Haggard's *She*, of which nearly half a million copies were very quickly sold. Thus was founded a publishing business of first-rate importance in its way – one which still lives and thrives under the control of Miss Estelle Stead. Perhaps the most famous feature on its list is the series of volumes for children taken from all the literatures of the world, known as 'Books for the Bairns' – wonderful pennyworths, each with sixty-four pages of text and pictures on every page.

These 'Penny Steadfuls,' as *Punch* was the first to call them, were beyond a doubt the best antidote to the poison of our British 'Penny Dreadfuls' that anyone had ever devised; and, although fastidious critics were shocked by Stead's temerity in cutting five-sixths or so out of the *chefs d'œuvre* of Fielding and Scott and Thackeray and Dickens and in providing fresh titles for poems which he felt their authors had misnamed,[1] this new departure had on the whole a

[1] For instance, he gave to Clough's poem, 'The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich,' the title 'The Love Story of a Young Man,' in the confident belief 'that at least twenty persons would now read the poem for one who read it under its old name.' This led someone to remark in the *World:* 'I wonder whether the circulation of *The Epic of Hades* would be increased twenty-fold if it were re-christened *High Life Below Stairs*?

remarkably good reception from the Press. I shall give a couple of specimens from early reviews : the first from the pen of Stead's old acquaintance, Andrew Lang, gaily frivolous, as was his wont. It is from an article in the *Morning* (a short-lived daily newspaper) for December 30, 1895 – an article entitled 'Mr. Stead's Scissors':

'Collaboration is usually a failure, but it would not be so if one labourer were confined to the use of the abhorred shears. For a moiety of the profits I will assist any really successful and popular novelist (whom I can read at all) by cutting him down. Authors cannot do it for themselves. I have written a novel ("Advt.") myself, and tried to cut it down and compress it. I failed. I yawned over the *Conquerors*, but my scissors refused to do their office. Had I only known that Mr. Stead had his instrument ready I would have applied to him with perfect confidence in his fortitude and goodwill. But it is too late and he is, perhaps, at this moment shedding the life-blood of *Tom Jones*. Indeed, he may have sent Thomas to the hulks, and married Sofia to Blifil. I tremble as I think of what Mr. Stead, with his passion for purity, may be doing to the foundling! I hear the shrieks of Mr. Jones. I am a witness of his agony and despair! Out of the virtuous life of Joseph Andrews, Lady Booby, I fear, must depart, and it is to Mr. Stead that I look for a chaste family version of *Don Juan*.'

My second extract also begins in jocular vein, but in its warm appreciation it is characteristic of the great majority of the newspapers. It is from the *Dundee Advertiser* of December 19, 1896:

'This is a wonderful age and not the least remarkable of its men is Mr. W. T. Stead, past editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in its golden days, present editor of one of the most remarkable of the magazines, an author of half a dozen schemes that if put in practice would almost revolutionize the world. He has just done crowning Joseph of Birmingham King of Israel, and turning from that edifying diversion – readers of his *Review of Reviews* Christmas Number will find it so – he claims public attention with the issue of two dozen numbers of his Penny Poets, in two neat cases, each containing twelve numbers, and so fashioned as to grace any library shelf, no matter how patrician may be the tastes of its owner. Perhaps, of all Mr. Stead's life-work this popularization of the master poets will remain his greatest and

most useful achievement. To the firesides of the people he has by this method brought the aerial roseate fancies of Keats, the sublime pictures of Milton, the heathery braes and murmuring streams of Burns, the idyllic pageants of Tennyson, the haunting echoes of Moore, and the homely numbers of Whittier. What more need he do! It is for the reading public to fitly recompense so far as it can one of the foremost literary ventures of the age. (London : *Review of Reviews* Office, 3*s*. per two sets.)'

Of all Stead's life-work, this was undoubtedly the achievement that won him most universal applause.

## IV

### ON THE EVE OF THE NEW DEPARTURE

Stead's Letter-book for the closing months of 1903 is worth glancing through rapidly. 'I am at the present moment in one of my high moods,' he wrote on October 25 to Mme. Selenka, a clever German lady who had been a prominent member of the Stead-Moscheles-Mijatovitch group at The Hague, 'and am likely to remain so until the beginning of the New Year, when I suppose I shall have to face the realities and disillusions which come to all attempts to carry out a great project, but I expect I shall start my long-talked of daily paper in London at the beginning of January.'

He remained in that 'high mood' – the right mood for a gamble! Stead, in his frequent examinations of conscience, was not given to calling himself a gambler, but a gambler he often was in business matters, and this *Daily Paper* was the biggest gamble of all. 'I have not yet got the money,' he writes on November 6 to his son Harry, at that date *en route* to Melbourne, there to take over from Dr. Fitchett the control of the Australian *Review of Reviews*,[1] 'but it seems to me so absolutely certain that the paper will be a success that I have ventured to go ahead. I do not really need more than £5,000 to start the paper, over and above the sum of £10,000 necessary to pay the cost of the pictures.' The 'pictures,' a selection of colour-prints, were an expensive supplementary venture, intended to

[1] Dr. Fitchett had been taking his own line over the war, and he and Stead now agreed to part company.

advertise and 'boom' the newspaper, whilst bringing in a large revenue themselves. They were to be issued simultaneously in portfolios.

A week later he writes to Harry again to tell him about the 'gorgeous advertising dodges' which he has in view – he wishes Harry were in London to share in the fun! 'At present,' he says, 'I am elaborating an idea for sprinkling £100 over London in shillings, half-crowns, five-shillings, ten shillings and £1 cheques, to be dropped from above by means of a balloon – the great difficulty is to be sure that the balloon will sail across London. My idea is to lower these cheques each in a neat little envelope advertising the paper and letting them loose from the balloon in small parachutes which would descend gracefully all over London. It will cause the most almighty scramble that has ever been known in history. I wanted to let off pilot balloons with slow burning stars, but they say it is rather dangerous as it might set fire to a warehouse. I think of having decorated steamers to go up and down the river playing lovely music and displaying pictures. Also firework displays in various parts of London. . . . I have bespoken Queen's Hall for New Year's Day' – that was for a great inaugural meeting of his helpers and sympathizers. The New Year's Day meeting was to come off successfully enough, but the steamers had to be dispensed with on grounds of expense and the local fireworks were vetoed by the municipal authorities!

Stead's American ally, Mr. John E. Milholland, is normally of as sanguine a temperament as Stead's own. As to this new project, however, he evidently had his doubts. The *Daily Paper* 'is going to be a real slap-up success,' Stead assures him, 'although I know you do not think so.'

Another American friend who had no belief in the scheme was Mr. Carnegie. In one of his earliest Christmas Annuals, 'Mr. Carnegie's Conundrum,' Stead had given his own solution to the problem how that gentleman's millions might best be spent. Now he wants the *Daily Paper* to be used as 'a very useful kind of Missionary Supplement' to the Carnegie Libraries. He explains just what could be achieved for a subvention of £5,000 a year: what he contemplates is a kind of literary 'Revival' movement, crying, as with the voice of the Muezzin from his Minaret, 'To your Books, to your Books!' But this, he intimates, would be merely a side-show, a by-product. He wants from Mr. Carnegie no capital for the paper – the paper itself

is his own concern. 'I am putting into it all that I have made: – burning my ships and mortgaging all I possess.'

The circulation he is 'aiming at' or 'counting upon' – he sometimes uses the one expression, sometimes the other – is, he informs several correspondents, 200,000. Writing formally to his eldest son, Willy, on November 2, to offer him the assistant editorship at £500 a year, he explains with absolute candour that the enterprise is a speculative one. If at the end of the first month he has not secured a circulation of 200,000 the paper will be dropped. To other prospective assistants he is equally explicit.[1]

About half of the Letter-book is concerned with the *Daily Paper*, the rest with Stead's other interests of the moment, as multifarious as ever: a brand new Cancer Cure; an estimable young Chinaman who is investigating the English educational system; that letter to M. de Plehve concerning Finland, of which we have heard already; a discussion with Mr. Havelock Ellis concerning sexual abnormality; lunch engagements with Lord Esher and Mr. Alfred Beit, and a dozen other friends, male and female; and political recriminations, caustic but good-humoured, with Dr. Jameson, Dr. Rutherford Harris and Earl Grey. And a hundred other matters. Nearly all the letters are written in that sanguine frame of mind to which Stead confessed in addressing Mme. Selenka. Our next chapter will have to tell of the 'realities and disillusions.'

[1] In a letter to his son Harry, written in March, 1904, after the failure of the *Daily Paper*, Stead estimates the total net loss involved at £35,000. He calculates that, with the help of the money forthcoming regularly from the American *Review of Reviews*, which for some time previously had exceeded £5,000 a year, but which might decrease to £3,000, and by means of drastic economies at home and at Mowbray House (including the reduction of his own salary as editor of the *Review of Reviews* by £500 a year) he would be able in time to meet his liabilities. Eventually a very rich South African friend came handsomely to his relief.

# CHAPTER 27

# THE YEAR 1904

## I

### THE *DAILY PAPER*

STEAD'S first *Daily Paper* was still-born – his second died within five weeks. This second set-back threatened to prove a tragedy. To use a phrase of his own,[1] Stead seemed to have 'gone under' for good. But within a very few months of his discomfiture he was 'bobbing up' again.

In the history of the English Press the *Daily Paper* of 1904 will be allotted at most a page or two – perhaps it will be dismissed in less than a dozen lines. But its birth, brief existence, and sudden death, formed a unique episode in Stead's career and gave it a new direction, first sending him to South Africa and subsequently turning him into a student of the stage.

It was risky always to foretell failure for Stead, because the leading of difficult enterprises and forlorn hopes was his *métier*, and his unlooked-for successes more than once made pessimists look foolish; but among 'expert' observers there was probably only the one view, whether made public or kept private, about this new journalistic enterprise of his: it was doomed from the start. A letter which Stead received from the well-known newspaper-proprietor, Sir John Leng, from Dundee, dated January 6, 1904, expresses this almost universal opinion. 'I am watching with interest what you are doing,' Sir John Leng wrote: 'at the same time, I am very doubtful whether in view of the halfpenny papers in London, your present venture will be successful. Your motives and intentions are excellent and have my cordial sympathy, but I doubt whether there will be a sufficient demand for a new paper issued midway between the morning and evening papers' (this was one essential item of Stead's plan) 'at a time when men are at work, children at school, and women engaged in their domestic affairs.'

It seems certain that Sir John Leng was right in this, and that even if the actual contents of the *Daily Paper* had been all Stead intended them to be, there was no real chance for it. As things turned out, the paper did not come up to its founder's ideal in any respect, and the

[1] See p. 21.

arrangements which had been made for its production and distribution were faulty in the extreme. It was a fiasco from the start, its first issue not being ready 'on time' and its contents being, on the whole, a great disappointment. Its failure was immediate and irretrievable. Poor Stead broke down completely next day. The *Daily Paper's* last issue, that for February 9, contained the following 'Address to my Readers':

'The whole scheme of this newspaper was so novel and so complex that it entailed far more than the ordinary amount of work in its production. For, as it was stated from the first, my aim was not merely to create a paper for the Home and all its inmates, but to build up, upon the circulation of that paper, an organization which would in time be able to be useful to its subscribers as a means of mutual co-operation for all kinds of social service. The conception of the *Daily Paper* as a living link, binding all its readers into one great comradeship – with local depots as so many nerve-centres, and a messenger brigade as a daily renewed symbol of service – was sound in its essence; and some day will be carried out with far greater effect than I have ventured to dream of.

'But the attempt to improvise everything all out of one's own head, as the children say, is ever a perilous undertaking, and in this case it proved too much for the head. After seeing the second issue of the *Daily Paper* through the press I was prostrated for the first time in my life by a severe nervous collapse, which rendered it impossible for me to continue attendance at the office. My doctor looked grave, ordered me away instantly to the South of France, prescribed absolute cessation of all work, and predicted that if I did not obey his mandate I might wake up some morning and find my memory a total blank. I did not dare give up without a struggle. I continued to edit the paper after a fashion – at first from Wimbledon, and then, when the perpetual clang of the telephone drove me further afield, from my sea-side cottage. The task of bringing out the paper from day to day was undertaken by my staff, to whose loyalty, zeal, and affection I cannot pay too high a tribute. My share in the work was, perforce, limited to writing the leader and some of the occasional notes, and compiling the daily "Matins." I hoped against hope that I should recover my health and nervous energy sufficiently to resume the place allotted to me in the production of the paper.

'Alas! It was not to be. Despite the unwearying devotion of my wife and family, my health did not improve, and the prospect of being able to undertake the effective direction of the paper faded into the dim distance. A long sea voyage and complete abstention from journalistic work are prescribed as essential for my recovery. So I am off to South Africa on Thursday.'

* * *

The debut of any new journal has its interest for those of us who have been connected with the Press, and as immense numbers of Stead's friends and admirers may be included in this category, I am tempted to devote some space to that ill-fated first issue. It is full of vivid memories for myself because for the first fortnight I acted as Stead's 'literary editor' – that is to say, I looked after the columns which were allotted to book-reviews: it was my first opportunity of working under him and I had looked forward to it eagerly. For me, in obscurity 'behind the wings,' as for him in the limelight in the centre of the stage, that year, 1904, was to be fateful.

The first page of all was, from the standpoint of a very large section of Stead's sympathizers, almost above criticism. Mr. Henry Holiday had put all his heart and craftsmanship into a large decorative cartoon, suggested by Wordsworth's line, 'True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home,' and this was very well reproduced. There was a column of cheery and vigorous notes signed by Stead himself under the headline, 'To my Readers: Greeting!' The arrangement of the whole page was symmetrical and quite effective. On page 2, filling six half-columns, came an enthusiastic outline of a grandiose scheme for a great never-ending contemporaneous Romance of the World, told by England's cleverest story-tellers.[1] Page 3 was, if possible, more Stead-like still: in its centre a large 'Public House Map of Paddington'; above and below this, and to either side, sensationally displayed particulars of a Census of Visitors to the Public Houses in question on Sunday, December 27.[2]

[1] See Appendix II.

[2] Mr. Albert H. Wilkerson, of the National Liberal Club, was responsible for the Census. He opened an office for it in Paddington and employed 550 'enumerators.' He proposed to put as a headline to his Report, 'Worshippers at the Shrine of Bacchus,' but Stead disapproved. 'He smiled,' Mr. Wilkerson writes me, 'but said that the problem was so grave that he did not wish to treat it sensationally. He wished the facts presented merely to draw the attention of thoughtful reformers.'

The principal feature of page 4 was a so-called 'Eye Witness's' account, dated January 4, 1642, of King Charles's *Coup d'Etat*; while in neighbouring columns Mr. G. F. Watts, R.A., expressed his approval of the 'Portfolio of Pictures' which accompanied the issue, and Lady Aberdeen, another unfailing well-wisher, extolled Stead's idea for a *Daily Paper* 'Girls' Messenger Brigade.' Page 5 was 'For the Bairns – Old and Young.' Next came, on page 6, 'Our Aims,' followed by an interview with Pius X, specially secured by Mr. George Lynch – trust Stead not to leave out the Pope! And then, on page 7, News of the Day, Home and Foreign. Page 8 was mine – two columns of the *Daily Paper's* Literary Programme, and four columns of publishers' advertisements. An elaborate scheme for local depots which were to establish the paper securely in every district of London filled half of page 10. Page 9, page 11 (with anecdotes and an insurance coupon) and page 12 were filled with advertisements.

A delightful, refreshing, uplifting paper: so it seemed to Stead's thick-and-thin supporters – people who, with good enough reason, deplored the character of our average London daily, with its divorce-court revelations, its betting news and its sordid and conscienceless catering to the lowest tastes.

Even among men of the world there were a few to applaud. 'I consider that a most masterly piece of journalism,' wrote Mr. Henniker Heaton, M.P., from the Carlton Club, on January 14, with reference to the Public House page, 'and I am, as you know, an old newspaper hand.' He had subscribed to the paper from its first issue, he went on to declare, 'because I think, and have always said, you are the IDEAL journalist.'

Other friends were less encouraging. 'Not in Stead's usual form,' they said among themselves, dubiously: 'will he be able to pull it through?'

'A crank production of the most hopeless kind' – such was the verdict alike of the Expert Newspaper Man and the Man in the Street.

With what zest and with what high hopes I compiled those two book-columns of my own! I was making, I felt, a fresh start in life. For years I had been just 'jogging along' happy-go-luckily on the editorial staff of Cassell and Co., interested enough in my work and keenly appreciative of the pleasant society into which it brought me

– that of authors and artists, for the most part – but not altogether contented with my lot and extremely critical of the elderly gentlemen who controlled the fortunes of the firm.[1] Here, on this new venture of the wonderful Stead, I saw my chance of success!

And what a difference there was between Stead's reception of my ideas and the apathy or alarm of Cassell and Co.'s Directors whenever I had submitted to them some – as I thought – promising new project! I had met Stead several times previously, but he knew nothing of me. All the more gratifying was his swift and warm responsiveness. Pacing up and down the room – his Mowbray House sanctum – he listened with keen attention to what I had to propose. A two-column signed review, under the heading, 'The Book of the Day,' was one item in my scheme – the term was to be justified by the 'unprecedented promptness' with which these particular books should be noticed. These signed reviews were to be contributed not by professional journalists exclusively, but by brilliant writers of all kinds.[2] I was very full of all my notions and Stead took to them instantaneously, engaging me there and then on my own terms. Never, it seemed to me, could such an interview have gone off so auspiciously.

Stead made one remark, however, which took my breath away. 'Lord Wolseley,' he said, 'will be ready to do one of those signed reviews for us. He is doing an article of another kind for me already – an article advocating universal military service.' So far, so well: I knew that Stead, though so strong for Peace, believed in keeping up, provisionally, our national defences. 'But,' he continued, 'I've warned Wolseley that it must be universal military service for women as well as men.'

Universal Military Service for women as well as men! – How utterly preposterous it sounded in 1904! I retailed it everywhere as a good story. But how differently it sounds now in this new England

[1] A year or two later the general managership passed into the hands of Mr. (now Sir) Arthur Spurgeon, who soon improved immensely the prospects of the business.

[2] My team of reviewers during that first fortnight was really a rather good one, be it I that say it! It included Mrs. Meynell and Max Beerbohm and G. K. Chesterton, all at their best; Harold Begbie and Edgar Jepson, both in very good form; and the late Mr. Arthur Diósy, the brilliant lecturer, who had never previously appeared in this rôle. The uniform payment for the articles was five guineas, a very reasonable fee, but soon found too high for the *Daily Paper's* resources.

of the W.A.A.C.'s and the W.R.E.N.'s! It was an uncanny example of Stead's prescience.

Among the friends to whom I told the story at the time was G. K. Chesterton, who capped it with one from his own experience – an illustration, this, of Stead's appetite for new ideas of any kind provided they seemed to aim at the welfare of humanity. Chesterton had broached in some weekly review the suggestion that the English Circulating Library system ought to be extended and improved by application to human beings. Might not the happiness of the subscribers be immensely increased by circulating among them, by the week or fortnight, the cheerful Mr. This, the stimulating Mr. That or the sympathetic Miss So-and-so. The necessary 'Rules' and suitable 'Subscription Terms' Chesterton indicated merely in rough outline and, having filled his column, he forgot all about the matter. Within twenty-four hours, however, he was to find that his seed had taken root in the most fertile soil for such seed in the whole world – the brain of the Editor of the *Review of Reviews*. An urgent letter came to him by express post: could he lunch with Mr. W. T. Stead to-morrow? He could and did, and in the course of a couple of hours of intensive cultivation at Gatti and Rodesano's (used habitually by Stead as a forcing house no less than as a feeding place) the benevolent project came miraculously to flower – or very nearly.

It is a dismal business to look through the little bundle of letters – the great bulk of them seem to have been destroyed long ago – which still survive as relics of that journalistic shipwreck. A couple of sentences will suffice to show how everything seemed to go wrong. 'There is a villainous blunder in it,' writes Mr. R. Crozier Long on January 7, about an article on naval defence – an article to which Stead, as a foremost authority on the subject himself, had attached special importance. 'The passage in question reads' Mr. Long says: 'as for Britain, we have submarines and plenty of them.' And Stead's whole point was that Britain *ought* to have plenty of them! By February 8 the paper was at its last gasp, almost, and by some mischance for which neither Stead himself nor any of his close associates was responsible a curt letter of dismissal had been sent to every member of the staff. Young Willie Stead in a letter to his father, full of deep feeling, writes that he would gladly give £100 for that letter not to have been written. 'I know I shall have your

support,' he adds, 'in insisting that a civil note at least shall be sent round to the staff which has worked splendidly.'

At last, on Monday, February 14, Stead obeyed his doctor's orders, starting not for the South of France, however, but for the Cape, accompanied by his elder daughter. They travelled by the Shaw-Saville steamship, *Athenie*. On the previous Saturday, he had addressed the following letter to all the members of his staff:

'MOWBRAY HOUSE,
'NORFOLK STREET, STRAND.
'*February* 11, 1904.

'MY DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

'I had expected at this moment to be on the sea. But business detained me, and I shall not join the ship until Saturday at Plymouth.

'I am glad to have an opportunity of once more expressing to you, each and all, my deep sense of gratitude to you all for your zealous, loyal and most capable service in the month during which the Daily Paper was published in London.

'I have to explain to you all how it is that the settlement of my liabilities to you must be arranged. My friends have very kindly undertaken to relieve me of all strictly legal liabilities to employés and creditors, but they have refused to go one step beyond the strict legalities of existing contracts and obligations.

'But I fully recognize that in some cases there is a difference between legal and moral liabilities, and I have to ask you in consideration of the extreme difficulties of the present situation to be so kind and generous to your late chief as to defer the question of moral liabilities until such time as I return from South Africa, when I promise you that I will undertake to discharge to the best of my power the moral obligation incurred by me to you.

'As to the nature and extent of these obligations I of course can say nothing. Each of you knows how far in your own judgment I am indebted to you in a financial sense over and above the legal liabilities which will be promptly met.

'Neither can I say anything positive about my future capacity to discharge liabilities of any kind. All that is in the future. But the future is in the hands of God and He has helped me so often and so wonderfully in the past, I venture with all humility to hope that He will see me even through this difficulty.

'I greet you lovingly and gratefully. 'Tis not in mortals to command

success, but you at least have deserved it. I wish you had not had to lament that your chief was not equally deserving.

'May God bless you and bring us all together again some day, somehow, somewhen, somewhere,

'Is the hearty prayer of

'Yours gratefully,

'(*Signed*) W. T. STEAD.'

II

SOUTH AFRICA: STEAD AND MILNER

'The severe disappointments of later years have not left you unaffected. The Peace Crusade was not quite a success. When d'Estournelles was over here, you were forgotten. The Nobel Prize went to England, but not to you. Rhodes died and you found yourself out of the Will. The great Rhodes scheme has dwindled down to mere scholarships. Then came your paper. You staked everything on it; it was to be your great hit. You had not the capital, but that did not prevent you from starting in grand style. No doubt you thought that necessary in our age; but cautious development was imperative. Continuous worry unnerved you, and the great crash came. You went to S.A. where you had friends on all sides – all the more reason for being cautious. That is what I meant to tell you at Hayling; but you were all buoyant, or anxious to appear so.' – DR. BORNS, of Wimbledon, to Stead, April 22, 1904.

A Pessimist, some one has said, is a person who has lived with an Optimist. The writer of a very long communication from which the above sentences are taken had not precisely lived with Stead, but he had been for a good many years associated with him as tutor to his children, especially to his sons. It was not a very cheerful missive to receive on returning from a rest cure, but it did not do Stead's spirits any harm. Cape Town had proved a vigorous stimulant to him during his stay there: his troubles had receded at once into the dim distance, and he had made an entirely new 'sensation.' On Monday, March 14, in the drawing-room of a well-known Dutch lady, Mrs. Koopmans-De Wet, he had delivered a speech, the echoes of which were still reverberating throughout South Africa!

The occasion was a gathering called together in honour of two men of note whose attitude during the war had brought them into conflict

with the British Government, Mr. F. S. Malan, a leading lawyer and politician, and Mr. Albert Cartwright, a prominent journalist. Both had been sent to prison for publishing articles reflecting upon the British method of conducting the war. Stead, suddenly called upon to address the company, let himself go! He began with a warm panegyric on Dutch bravery and, speaking as an Englishman who loved his country, he thanked his hearers and all those whom they represented 'for the splendid service they had done in battling for all the principles which had made England great, in defence of those principles which alone made the Empire possible,' and for contending, even to death, against those who were as false as George III had been to the true English ideal. This was the keynote of the main portion of the speech, listened to with deep emotion, we may be sure, by men and women who for years past had not heard such language from English lips; but Stead was never satisfied with mere sentiments, he was always for action, and what he was leading up to was a practical suggestion. Ought not the story of South African heroism to be enshrined in a full, complete, authentic history? He developed the proposal thus in his concluding words:

'What he thought was wanted was not so much a history in the ordinary sense of the word, as materials which would supply the future historian with authentic and adequately attested evidence taken at first hand of what South Africans had suffered for South Africa. The immense balance of suffering was on their side, but the record should be impartial, scientific, comprehensive, and should include the personal narrative of every South African man and every South African woman on either side who had suffered in the war for what they believed to be the welfare of South Africa.

'His friend, Mrs. Olive Cronwright-Schreiner, with a poet's instinct, preferred that the memory of the sacrifices of those times should have no other prompter than the sacred legend which South African mothers would whisper to their children, which they in turn would submit to future generations. He thought that legendary tradition might well be supplemented by written materials for the future historian. In England they had the Roll of Battle Abbey, which recorded the names of the Norman William's captains and knights whom he led nine centuries ago to assert his claim to the throne of England. To this day it was the proudest boast of English nobles

that the names of their ancestors were inscribed in that list. The record which he was pressing upon their attention would be the Golden Book of South African Heroism, and nine hundred years hence South Africans would take an honest pride in pointing their children to the well-attested record which told how their ancestors had counted not their lives dear to them, but gladly laid them down in the service of South Africa.

'Now was the time to begin the collection of this evidence. In every district, in every farm where were to be found those who had suffered, and those who had mourned their dead, the statements of those sorrows of the war should be carefully collected, sifted and recorded in some permanent form. In that Golden Book of South African Heroism should be found the full name and address of every man, woman or child who had died for South Africa on either side, and it should be a full and final account of the sufferings and losses borne by South Africa as a result of the war.

'You owe it (he said) to your own people to make this record before the witnesses may pass away or their memory becomes dim, and you owe it also to the world at large, in order that it may at last know on authority which cannot be gainsaid how little progress has been made in the civilizing and humanizing of war. Those who dread such a great national inquest will denounce this proposition on the plea that it will revive old and bitter memories of the war, and so mar the coming era of peace and conciliation. As if the memories of the war ever slumbered in the minds of those who have buried their dead! No. Believe me, the era of peace and conciliation will not really have begun in South Africa until all South Africans have learned to take an honest pride in the memory of the heroism displayed by South African men and still more by South African women during the war, and nothing will help more than the compilation of such a record as I have suggested. The day of peace and conciliation will have really dawned when South Africans have learned to say of each other, not with scorn or aversion, "he was a rebel" or "he was a loyalist," but only "he was one of the heroes of South Africa who was true to what he believed to be the duty which he owed to his country and his God." Then and not till then!' (Loud applause).

The speech was reported in the *South African News* for March 14, and Stead immediately distributed a four-leaf reprint of it headed

'The Golden Book of South African Heroism,' throughout the whole country. It was a characteristically rash thing to do, considering the intense bitterness which still existed between the two white races. Its first and most dramatic result was a message from Lord Milner, then at Johannesburg. Four days previously Lord Milner had telegraphed in answer to an inquiry from Stead as to whether they could meet, the one word 'Yes.' Stead now received this second telegram, also from Johannesburg:

'15th March. In view of your speech at Cape Town reported in yesterday's papers please regard my telegram of 10th March as cancelled.'

Lord Milner's feeling of resentment and indignation over Stead's behaviour was, of course, shared by the immense majority of the British in South Africa; and even among the Dutch and the British who sympathized with the Dutch the 'Golden Book' suggestion was widely regretted. Olive Schreiner's feeling, to which Stead alluded, prevailed generally. 'I had read your speech before I got your letter,' wrote to Stead a distinguished spokesman of the Cape pro-Boers, 'and I am bound to add with feelings of infinite pain.' Having reminded Stead somewhat acrimoniously that, by his encouragement of Rhodes, he himself had been to a great degree responsible for the war, the writer proceeds: 'Now, when we are trying, God knows with what sore hearts, to bind up the wounds and to repair the shattered fabric of society, you come out and, to make an afternoon holiday, you tear all the old wounds open, and teach, if I understand you aright, the doctrine of unforgetfulness – the same doctrine that Hamilcar taught Hannib l. . . . If the two races are to be always reminding each other of their injuries, and if the relations are to be those of English and Irish in Ireland, then there is no hope for South Africa. . . . Memories there will be of course, but to dwell on them more than we can help seems to me to be a damnable policy.'

In a very interesting but somewhat fo mless l ttle volume, entitled *The Best or the Worst of Empires*, consisting in part of his reflections upon the great Liberal victory of 1906 and in part of the letters which he sent to an American journal[1] from South Africa in 1904, Stead describes his astonishment at the commotion made by this Cape Town speech.

[1] *The Saturday Evening Post* of Philadelphia.

He is a little uncandid in implying that only the 'Loyalists' condemned it, but he reveals the fact that it did not bring him much approval from the pro-Boers or Dutch. He tells how, 'in order to dispel the nonsensical notion that I had endeavoured to stir up strife, when I was in reality endeavouring to unite the two races in a mutual act of patriotic piety,' he had the leaflet addressed to every man of influence and position in the country, with circular letters which he proceeds to transcribe. That he did not receive many replies, he adds, 'did not surprise me. My chief object was attained by the issue of the circular.'

If the speech was an indiscretion, it had no very serious consequences. It certainly did not spoil Stead's visit to South Africa, for both he and his daughter seem to have enjoyed themselves to the utmost; they went everywhere and saw everything, and were enthusiastically fêted. A visit to Dr. Jameson at Groote Schuur was the experience which meant most to Stead himself. We can imagine his joy and excitement on finding himself in the home of Cecil Rhodes!

The one misfortune which threatened was the loss of Milner's friendship – that would have been a misfortune indeed. But Milner's feeling for Stead, like Edmund Garrett's, was deep rooted, and the two were to meet again upon terms of warm regard. These lines from a letter written on January 1, 1907, in somewhat belated reply to a note from Stead, made a singularly welcome New Year's greeting:

'There has been nothing personal in the causes of the separation between us – just a profound difference in our own attitude to national affairs, which unfortunately is what we both care most about. And this, I fear, continues, and is likely to continue. But, as I have not the least doubt that you are quite as sincere and disinterested as I am myself, I can only regard this as a misfortune, not an injury done by you to me any more than it is the converse.

'There was a special reason why I thought it better we should not meet in South Africa. I was captain of a ship which you were – no doubt from the highest motives – doing your best to sink. I am no longer captain of that, or any, ship, but just a private citizen, no doubt with strong views on public affairs but with nothing in my charge – a position more congenial to me than public office. That being the case, there is no reason why we should not meet on private ground

or even on neutral public ground. And whether we do or not please be assured that I have always retained, towards you and Mrs. Stead, the affection springing from our old intimacy and your kindness to me in former days, and that it is in no mere perfunctory or conventional sense that I wish you both all future happiness, and sign myself,

'Yours ever,

'MILNER.'

## III

### STEAD BECOMES A PLAYGOER

A cutting from one of the weekly illustrated papers – the *Bystander* for October 26, 1904 – recalls to mind something of the excitement aroused that autumn by Stead's debut as a playgoer. The *Bystander* is quite annoyed. 'All the Press of the United Kingdom,' it complains, 'has been commenting on Mr. Stead's first visit to the theatre as though it were a matter of national importance.' And it proceeds to scoff at his 'genius for self-advertisement,' declaring that 'no one can compete with him in the ability to obtain general notoriety without payment.'

The desire for advertisement, I suspect, did count for more in this exploit than in almost any other in Stead's whole career. His motives, at all events, must have been more than usually mixed. For years past Miss Elizabeth Robins had been urging him to help towards the regeneration of the stage in England, and he had begun to feel that perhaps she was right: that was one motive. Natural curiosity must have been another. But the not less natural anxiety to score once again a big, popular success, make the whole town talk, and revive the diminished fortunes of the *Review of Reviews* – thus showing that, despite his *Daily Paper* disaster, there was life in the old dog yet! – will, perhaps, have been the factor which really prevailed.

From the strictly business point of view it was a risky speculation. The sales of the *Review* would go up in some quarters – especially in London; but they might drop heavily elsewhere. The Advertising Manager, apprehensive of protests, and possible boycotting, from the Nonconformists, was strongly against the experiment. Stead had taken his decision, however, and was not to be dissuaded.

He owed the idea in the first place to Sir Henry Irving, who had broached it as far back as 1886. The London playgoing world, like

cod in the trawler's tank, had become torpid and lethargic: a catfish in the tank would wake them up.[1] But in the 'eighties Stead was still too much of a Puritan. It was in 1891 that Miss Robins had begun to talk to him and in time he had begun to listen to her. To her persuasions had been added those of many others, among them the most influential of our critics, Mr. William Archer, who now rejoiced over Stead's conversion. It was by far the most important piece of theatrical news of the day, Mr. Archer declared in the *Morning Leader*. 'The theatre is too strong, too deep-rooted in human nature,' he continued, 'to be crushed by neglect or denunciation. Its animal vitality, so to speak, is not impaired by the discountenance of the sober-minded and intelligent classes. It laughs at the Puritan boycott and goes on its wanton way, with all its baser instincts strengthened and its higher impulses proportionately enfeebled. That Mr. Stead should have realized this, and should have determined to face a responsibility which he has hitherto shirked, is, I repeat, the best of good news. It will be extremely interesting to see what impression the theatre makes upon his vivid imagination and his keen intelligence, unwarped by tradition, unblunted by familiarity.'

* * *

Stead's introductory article appeared in the *Review of Reviews* for July under the heading 'First Impressions of the Theatre.' – I. 'From the Outside.' He began autobiographically thus:

'How comes it that I should have reached my fifty-fifth year without ever having been to the theatre? To answer that question in the simplest, frankest fashion is the first duty I owe to my readers.

'STARTING POINT

'I was born and brought up in a home where life was regarded ever as the vestibule of Eternity, and where everything that tended to waste time, which is life in instalments, was regarded as an evil thing. In nothing is there a greater contrast than between the ordinary conception of time of the man in the street and that which prevails in the Puritan household. To one, time is often a bore, a thing to be killed, and one of the chief arts of life is how to pass it as quickly as possible. To the other, time is the most precious of things, graciously

[1] See Mr. H. W. Nevinson's parable in that admirable book, *Essays in Freedom and Rebellion*, from which I have borrowed the simile.

given to mortal man as an invaluable trust for all manner of uses, on the right employment of which from day to day and from hour to hour depends our eternal welfare. We lived our early days in the spirit of the opening lines of the familiar hymn:

> ' "Time is earnest, passing by,
> Death is earnest, drawing nigh;
> Sinner, wilt thou trifling be?
> Time and death appeal to thee."

'Cecil Rhodes's bitter cry in the hour and article of death – "So much to do, so little done" – was a sentiment which found more or less articulate expression at the close of every day as the family assembled for evening prayers.

### 'THE STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

'Each of us was born into a world full of duties and responsibilities which we could only discharge by the strenuous and unremitting use of every available waking hour. To mention only one thing, there were so many books to be read, there was so much to be learned of the world in which we lived, so much to be mastered before we could gain even a glimmering vision of the majesty and glory of past ages, that life was all too short. Instead of finding time hang heavy on our hands, we never had time enough to get through what ought to have been done. Being thus trained from earliest childhood to the strenuous life, the starting-point from which we looked at all questions differed *toto cælo* from that of those to whom *ennui* was a reality. To the latter leisure was given for amusement. To us it was lent for use, and woe be to the unprofitable servant who wasted the talent thus entrusted to his stewardship.

### 'SUICIDE BY INSTALMENTS

'If life was spent as ever in the Taskmaster's eye, if upon our utilization of the fleeting moment might depend the very salvation of souls – our own and those of our brethren – through the endless ages of eternity, it is obvious that amusement of all kinds would be sternly relegated to a subordinate position. We might amuse ourselves, but only in order to recuperate our energies for the diligent performance of the work of life. To make amusement the preoccupation of all our spare time, to regard it in any other light than as a means of the

recreation of mental and physical strength necessary to fit us adequately for the discharge of the daily duties, for the due performance of which we each of us had to answer hereafter before the judgment seat of the Eternal, was a monstrous perversion, a grievous sin. To kill time was to commit suicide by instalments.

'THE DIABOLIC TRINITY

'Hence in our North Country manse a severe interdict was laid upon all time-wasting amusements which did not directly minister to the restoration of moral, or physical energy, and especially was the interdict severe upon those methods of dissipation which were so fascinating as to make them dangerous rivals to the claims of duty. "Do you ever go to the Derby?" I asked a lad on Derby Day. "No, sir," he replied stoutly, "it is a temptation." He was right. But there were many other temptations than the racecourse. Among them in my youth three stood conspicuous from the subtlety of their allurement, and the deadly results which followed yielding to their seductions. The first was the Theatre, which was the Devil's Chapel; the second was Cards, which were the Devil's Prayer Book; and the third was the Novel, which was regarded as a kind of Devil's Bible, whose meretricious attractions waged an unholy competition against the reading of God's Word. Where novel-reading comes in Bible-reading goes out, was a belief which, after all, has much to justify it in the experience of mankind.

'NOVELS AND CARDS

'All three were on our Index Expurgatorius. I was in my teens before I was allowed to read Scott's novels, a concession granted on the ground that they were a species of literature apart from the ordinary romance. As for cards, to this day I cannot tell their names. Whist is to me as Chinese; and as for Bridge, it is an unfathomed mystery. I can well remember the sentiment of horror, not unmixed with dread, when, in our next-door neighbour's house was discovered a pack of playing cards. It was as if the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment had been found in the baggage of Achan. I comforted myself in my childish mind by reflecting that there was a solid wall between our home and the place where the Devil's Prayer Book lay, but the contact was too close to be pleasant. Even now I am not sure whether, in view of the havoc which Bridge has made,

and the innumerable hours which are sacrificed to card-playing, the prejudice against cards was not well justified. As time-wasters it would be hard to find their equal.

'OBJECTIONS TO THE THEATRE

'It was, however, the Theatre which lay under a special ban. It combined in itself all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It wasted time, it wasted money, it compelled late hours, it dissipated instead of re-creating energy, it was as fascinating as the cup of Circe, and it was often in its results as disastrous to the moral sense of its votaries.

'To those who were in close contact with extremes of poverty and misery, who had to scrape and save and economize every penny in order to keep going the various pious works entrusted to their care, there seemed something positively wicked in scattering away in a single night's pleasuring as many pennies as would have kept the collection going for half a year. The late hours which theatre going entailed also prejudiced it in the eyes of those who were brought up in the faith that to be early to bed and early to rise was the beginning not of godliness but of health and prosperity. Those who went to the theatre at night were never so fresh and fit for work next day. Worse still, instead of the play giving them a heartier zest for the plain, everyday duties of "the daily round, the common life," their minds were preoccupied with the memories of the mimic world in which they had passed so many delightful hours. It fevered and enflamed the mind. The prosaic task of next day seemed intolerably dull when contrasted with the fascination of the fairy realm of the stage.

'THE STAGE AND MORALITY

'But all these objections to the theatre faded into insignificance before that which was, which is, and perhaps will ever be the one great outstanding objection to the stage. This objection is that it is hard enough to obey the Seventh Commandment, even if you don't go to the theatre, but that it is a great deal more difficult to keep straight if you do. That is often laughed at as a Puritanical objection. But there is only too much truth in it. That the stage appeals to the passions is undeniable. Half the best plays turn upon the committal or the avoidance of adultery. To say that it is possible for the most exciting of all subjects to be discussed, not only without reserve, but

with all the freedom and force of expression which the combined genius of author and actor can devise, without exposing the spectators, in whose veins boils the hot blood of youth, to considerable temptation, is nonsense.

### 'A WORD FOR "CLOISTERED VIRTUE"

'It may be an ordeal to which it may be right to expose our young men and maidens; there is a good deal to be said against a cloistered virtue. But the logical carrying out of Milton's principle of exposing the youngling to a knowledge of the utmost that Vice promises to her followers would take them to worse places, from which all parents would exclude their children. The prayer "Lead us not into temptation," seemed to us in those days inconsistent with theatre going. For the inflaming of the senses, the spectacle of passionate love-making by beautiful women before a crowded audience, is an added risk from which I must honestly confess I am grateful that I was shielded by the traditions of a Puritan home.'

Stead proceeds to recall how thrilled and excited he was at the age of twenty by hearing 'Antony and Cleopatra' read aloud at the Literary and Philosophical Society's Lecture Rooms in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Cleopatra, he reflects, was only a stout lady in evening dress sitting in a chair, reading in turn all the parts of the play – 'what would it have been if she had been the Cleopatra of the stage?' Having learned from this, and one or two other such experiences, 'the particular kind of fool' he was, Stead declares that, however it may be with other young men, he is convinced that he himself did well to hold aloof in those days from the stage.

As a matter of actual fact, however, he proceeds to ask, is not the temptation to go demented over actresses one from which few enthusiastic young men are immune? What, after all, could be more natural? The actress is the first woman from whose lips they hear the vibrating accents of passion. And he transcribes some glowing sentences from D'Annunzio's account of 'la Foscarina.' From D'Annunzio's poetry he passes on to the plain prose of Mr. Clement Scott, then the most popular of dramatic critics, with his sensational statement (which he had recanted, though Stead was at the time unaware of this) that: 'it is nearly impossible for a woman to remain pure who adopts the stage as a profession.' If this be true, if all

actresses are immoral, surely, Stead urges, the interdict on the stage is justifiable.

And he concludes his first article thus:

'In the small world in which I lived as a boy no one who regarded life as a serious thing ever went to the theatre. A religious playgoer seemed almost as absurd a collocation of terms as a Christian drunkard. The theatre was emphatically of the world, worldly. Of those of my acquaintances who went to the theatre, I do not remember ever having seen one who seemed to have got any moral or intellectual impulse towards higher things by his theatre-going, while not a few showed only too palpable signs of moral deterioration. It may be otherwise to-day. Judging the modern stage as the rankest of outsiders, it does not seem to me from the notices I read in the newspapers that the majority of pieces which attract the patronage of the public make any pretence of being more than midriff-tickling time-wasters, while some of them are admittedly not calculated to foster either a strenuous or even a moral life.

'THE GREAT STUMBLING BLOCK

'As to the personal character of the actors and actresses, I know nothing except by common report, which is often a common liar. But to my poor thinking, the character of the actors and actresses cannot be left out of account. A notoriously immoral actress does more to deprave the public conscience by her life than she can possibly redeem it by the most admirable representation of heroines of the most immaculate virtue. For every immoral actress who has an opportunity of commanding the admiration and exciting the devotion of men by her genius on the stage inevitably impairs their antipathy to vice. When the sinner is so adorable her sin appears venial – a negligible quantity – and no one can regard licentiousness with indifference without to some extent lowering his moral standard. And the greater her genius, the more irresistible becomes the temptation to tolerate her adulteries. Not until the standard of morality is as high on the stage as it is, say, among the members of a church choir – not a very impossible standard this – do I see how it will be possible to overcome the reluctance of a very great number of very good people to recognize the theatre as an indispensable agency for the moral and intellectual elevation of the community.

'NEVERTHELESS

'But as I grew older and saw more of life, and realized how often the struggle for an unattainably lofty ideal stands in the way of securing benefits which might have been ours if we would but have been content with second best, I began to doubt whether the policy of abstention does not purchase the safety of the abstainer by permanently increasing the perils and the mischief to which the non-abstainers are exposed. Am I justified in saving my own soul alive by refusing to encounter a risk which, if I faced it, might make temptation less for others? If by abstention you could efface the theatre from the world there might be something said for adopting such a course – on the assumption that the influence of the stage as it now exists is on the whole demoralizing. But as no amount of abstention will have any other effect beyond that of throwing the whole control of the theatre into the hands of those who do not look at life from our standpoint, persistence in such a policy is not obviously justifiable.

'THE TWOFOLD QUESTION

'After much consideration of the matter, I came to see that the problem resolves itself into two, both questions of fact on which it may be possible to contribute some first-hand information. The first is, how far does the modern stage deserve to be regarded as – to paraphrase Matthew Arnold's definition of the Deity – "a stream of tendency not ourselves making for righteousness?" The second is, whether there are sufficient numbers of persons holding the Puritan view of the theatre for their abstention or their attendance to make any difference, one way or the other, to the character of the stage.

'Is the theatre a power making for righteousness? My definition of righteousness is exceeding broad. I am willing to regard it as a tendency operating in the direction of righteousness if it contributes to the innocent recreation and general mirth of mankind. I do not insist that it shall always "purify the passions through pity and fear"; I shall be well content if, after careful observation of the plays which are being acted on the London stage, it seems to me they tend to increase the happiness and elevate thought of the audience more than they contribute to inflame their passions or waste their time.

'THE THEATRE IN THE PAST

'Without going into any long historical retrospect, we may take it as common ground that there have been periods when the theatres were so pestilential from a moral point of view that the only thing decent people could do was to keep away from them. In ancient Rome the whole authority of the Christian Church was used in opposition to the theatre, whose unspeakable corruption had compelled the interference of pagans like Domitian and Trajan. Professor Ward admits that when Constantine suppressed the theatre, "the art of acting had become the pander of the lewd, or frivolous itch of eye or ear, and the theatre had contributed its utmost to the demoralization of the world."

'It was much the same in England at the beginning and the end of the seventeenth century. Mr. Green says of the later period of the Elizabethan drama: "The grossness of the later comedy is incredible. Almost as incredible is the taste of the later tragedies for horrors of incest and blood." Again, speaking of the drama of the Restoration period, he says: "Seduction, intrigue, brutality, cynicism, debauchery, found fitting expression in dialogue of studied and deliberate foulness."

'Macaulay says: "From the day on which the theatres were reopened they became seminaries of vice, and the evil propagated itself. The profligacy of the representations drove away sober people. The frivolous and dissolute who remained required every year stronger and stronger stimulants."

'It will, I think, be admitted that if the theatre were in such a state to-day we had better give it a wide berth. But it is not seriously asserted that our stage is in any such condition. What is the truth on the matter? How good is it? How bad is it? What is the truth about it?

'MY PILGRIMAGE OF INQUIRY

'To answer that question I propose this year to undertake the pilgrimage of investigation suggested to me long ago by Sir Henry Irving and Miss Robins, the results of which I will place before my readers in due course month by month. My first impressions may or may not be worth reading; they will at least be the first impressions of a mature mind brought for the first time in contact with the latest developments of the British stage.'

Stead's manifesto – so to call it – drew forth comments from theatrical celebrities of all sorts, from Miss Gertie Millar and Miss Marie Studholme to F. R. Benson[1] and Mr. Sydney Grundy and Mr. Bernard Shaw. Mr. Benson twitted him with his temerity in venturing at fifty-five to discuss an art of which he admitted that he knew nothing. Mr. Sydney Grundy and 'G. B. S.' treated him to some delightful chaff. Here is the conclusion of the latter's long epistle:

'Finally *don't* talk about immoral actresses. What do you mean, you foolish William Stead, by an immoral actress? I will take you into any church you like, and show you gross women who are visibly gorged with every kind of excess, with coarse voices and bloated features, to whom money means unrestrained gluttony and marriage unrestrained sensuality; but against whose characters – whose "purity" as you call it – neither you nor their pastors dare level a rebuke. And I will take you to the theatre, and show you women whose work requires a constant physical training, an unblunted nervous sensibility, and a fastidious refinement and self-control which one week of ordinary plutocratic fat-feeding and self-indulgence would wreck, and who anxiously fulfil these requirements; and yet, when you learn that they do not allow their personal relations to be regulated by your gratuitously unnatural and vicious English marriage laws, you will not hesitate to call them "immoral." The truth is that if the average British matron could be made half as delicate about her sexual relations, or half as abstemious in her habits as the average stage heroine, there would be an enormous improvement in our national manners and morals. When you sit in the stalls, think of this, and, as the curtain rises and your eyes turn from the stifling grove of fat, naked shoulders round you to the decent and refined lady on the stage, humble your bumptious spirit with a new sense of the extreme perversity and wickedness of that uncharitable Philistine bringing-up of yours.

'Hoping that your mission will end in your own speedy and happy conversion, – I am, as ever, your patient Mentor,

'G. BERNARD SHAW.'

* * *

'The Tempest' as produced by Mr. Beerbohm Tree (not yet Sir Herbert) at His Majesty's Theatre on September 23, 1904, was

[1] Afterwards Sir Frank Benson.

Stead's first play. Miss Elizabeth Robins and another friend accompanied him and having engaged Boy Messengers to take the places in advance, they found themselves in the first row of the Pit. Should anyone ever compile an anthology of English theatrical criticisms Stead's comments on that performance of 'The Tempest' ought certainly to find a place in it. They are delightfully free from the ordinary critic's *clichés*. He begins:

'It was a misty night of mid-autumn. The long spell of summer weather had broken. There was a nipping chill in the air, a slight mist hung over the streets, and it rained a little. As I drove across the town from St. Clement Danes to Paddington to meet Miss Elizabeth Robins, who was to accompany me to the theatre, I surrendered myself to a delicious reverie on the marvel and the mystery of it all.

'Forty years had passed since first Prospero and his magic isle came into my life, bringing with them the delicate Ariel, the monster Caliban, and the lovers Ferdinand and Miranda. For forty years they had peopled the chambers of my imagination, invisible as Ariel, but far more real to me and contributory to my soul's life than all but some half-dozen of the princes and politicians, merchants and citizens, who for nearly three hundred years have seen the "Tempest." I had never seen it save in my mind's eye, and to-night for the first time these airy, unsubstantial companions of my pilgrimage were to take bodily shape and tangible substance before my eyes.'

Then come reflections on Shakespeare's London and on that first performance of the play at the Court at Whitehall in 1613 when it was witnessed by 'Prince Charles, then a sickly boy of thirteen, who had but for twelve months been heir-apparent and Elizabeth, his elder sister, a radiant beauty with a lion heart, who followed the idyll of Miranda's love sitting hand in hand with her own Ferdinand, the Elector Palatine Frederic V, who was to marry her before the year was out. Little they dreamed, as they admired the latest product of Master Shakespeare's genius, or laughed at his quaint conceits, that all three would share the misfortunes of the Duke of Milan, and that one of them, within gunshot of the place where they were then sitting, would, as the central actor in a far grimmer drama, have his head shorn off his shoulders by the headsman's axe. His sister Elizabeth, six years later, was to be Queen of Bohemia for one brief twelvemonth, and then for the rest of her life a fugitive and an exile,

deprived of her throne and dominion, but ever, as the Queen of hearts, the rallying-point of Protestant chivalry in Northern Europe. Mother she was to be in time to come, of Prince Rupert – Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who was destined to shatter himself to ruin at Naseby against the Ironsides of a man who did not believe in stage plays, but who, nevertheless, played no inconsiderable part on the stage of history.'

These things fresh in his memory – for Stead's memory from boyhood days had been saturated with knowledge of that period – he and Miss Robins, while waiting for the curtain to rise, studied and discussed the people around them. Anything more unlike the old pit of which he used to read – the pit of Shakespeare, of Garrick, and even of Kean – would have been difficult to imagine. 'Row after row of smooth, decorous, reserved, well-dressed, conventional creatures, in conventional dress, doing the conventional thing in the conventional way' – that was the audience he saw at His Majesty's. And when the performance began, he noted that there was 'no display of enthusiasm, none of emotion and absolutely no manifestation of disapproval.'

Then comes his description of the opening scene – the shipwreck. He did not care for it. Clever, ingenious, unsatisfying mechanical work merely. Not Shakespeare and nothing like a real wreck. Nobody who had seen the wrecks 'which used to strew the mouth of the Tyne with dead in the old days before the piers were built' would take much stock in this. 'The cruel choking sense of agony that comes to you when you see the final tragedy of the ship and the storm' – that was absent. And in all the ingenuity of carpentry and scene shifting was lost the splendid phrase of the Boatswain – 'What care these roarers for the name of king?'

Miranda realized Stead's ideal – 'beautiful exceedingly, tender, innocent and graceful, a very maid who save her father ne'er had seen a man.' But alas! her utterance was indistinct. He could catch only three words in ten. Prospero, on the other hand, articulated every syllable but – was not Prospero. 'There was nothing psychic about him.' It was to the coming of Ariel, however, that Stead the spiritualist, the dweller in Borderland, looked forward with most eager expectation. The mystic world in which, as his last word to mankind, Shakespeare had laid the scene of 'The Tempest,' had for many years past been Stead's real world. To him Ariel was no 'creature of a disordered imagination.'

'The air is full of Ariels,' he proceeds, 'nor is the enchanted isle the only place where sweet music is discoursed by invisible songsters. So far as that goes, England is as enchanted as Prospero's isle, and I know at least one man now living amongst us who has heard, and may even now, for aught I know, be hearing, sweet mystic music discoursed by unseen orchestras and invisible singers. When you dream or when you look into a crystal, if you have the gift, you pass the portals which divide the world of sense and matter from the psychic realm which encompasses us all. Those who are so dungeoned up in the grosser forms of matter as to ignore the existence of all the myriad intelligences which surround us may treat "The Tempest" as a mere fantasy. Shakespeare thought otherwise.'

What would be Ariel's sex? In the text Ariel is referred to twice as male. Stead would have Ariel a woman. It was with relief he saw her come, 'woman every inch of her; the fairy-like grace of her movements, the very folds of her garments, the sweetness of her beautiful features, and the cadences of her voice, all proclaimed her unmistakable woman.' But her absurdly small wings troubled him. If she had been a little sprite they might have been some use to her. 'But for this "lang-leggit lassie" they were as preposterous as the fin-like pinions of the penguin.'

Stead had prefaced his article by saying that the Play was a very challenging thing – the Play in general. He now elaborated this point, insisting upon the conflict between the stage performance and his own mind's imaginings. Reading 'The Tempest' he had grieved over the misfortunes of Prospero, but for the Prospero of His Majesty's he felt no pity. As for Caliban –

'Nowhere is the challenging nature of the play more strongly displayed. And at the risk of exposing myself to the charge of egotism – a charge which is absurd when the whole value, great or small, of the dissertation depends solely upon that very quality of frank confession of the actual impression produced upon the mind of the writer – I venture to set forth some of the challenging thoughts which Caliban produced. The first, I confess, was a sense of irritation at Prospero. Here, I thought, is your handiwork, this brutalized creature, degraded by your tortures and your slavery out of the semblance of humanity. And then, however absurd it may seem to those who have not had the remorseful faculty of self-application

cultivated since childhood, there came to me the challenge, Thou art the man! The severity of the implacable moralist works out – so. And I felt strange searchings of heart for two things.

### 'WHO CALIBANIZED THE THEATRE?

'The first was about the Theatre itself. We complain of its shortcomings, of its evil influence, of its corruption; but how much of all these things is but the direct result of our own stern, unrelenting severity, maintained as ruthlessly as Prospero kept up the punishment of Caliban, without mercy and without ruth? Puritan sentiment having caught the theatre in the Restoration times, attempting with obscene violence to outrage the purity of the English home, has subjected it ever since to pains and penalties which were equivalent to a sentence of major excommunication by the Puritans and their descendants down even to the present day. Is not the fact that I, this night, am witnessing my first play, in itself sufficient witness to the severity of the interdict? And if the theatre is Calibanized so far as being shut out from the encouragement, patronage, and support of the more serious portion of the nation, who is to blame for the result?

'But this was not the only challenging question which Caliban pressed home. At this present moment, when I sit watching the result of the merciless enslavement inflicted upon Caliban for attempting the virtue of a maid, and condemning Prospero in my heart, there are sitting doleful in felons' cells all over the land, and not this land only, but throughout the English-speaking world, men serving out sentences of imprisonment with hard labour for offences against the virtue of maids, who but for my action nineteen years ago would have been free from prison bars. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which begot many similar measures in the Colonies and the United States, made it an offence punishable with two years' hard labour to commit or attempt to commit the offence of which Caliban was guilty, under the plea of the consent of the victim, so long as she had not attained the age of sixteen. In these last nineteen years, thousands of years of imprisonment, in the aggregate, have been inflicted upon such offenders. I think the change in the law was justified. The punishment was certainly not excessive. But this spectacle of Caliban, brutalized by punishment, is, I confess, a disagreeable reminder of the other side of the question. Who can say how many of those men convicted under my Act have sunk into the

hopeless criminal class, from which they may have found it as vain to escape as Caliban from the spells of Prospero?'

This is followed first by an ingenious parallel between the case of Caliban and that of the Matabele, and later, by a still more remarkable application of the play to politics. I really think the story of Stead's life would be incomplete without these passages:

'It is my fate to be blessed or cursed with a mind which however weak it may be in other respects, is exceptionally endowered with the faculty of seeing analogies where others see none, and in discovering resemblances which to others are non-existent. An almost abnormal development of the brain cells responsible for the association of ideas, led me to discern in the Passion Play at Ober Ammergau I know not how many situations exactly reproducing phases of our own political struggle at home. It was inevitable, therefore, that with such a play as "The Tempest" and such a symbolic character as Caliban, I should find myself overwhelmed with resemblances, awful and grotesque, or otherwise. But I never anticipated so apposite an apologue as that which was afforded me by a scene treated by the audience, for the most part, in the spirit of broad farce, but which is one of the most pitiful in the whole play: I refer to that in which Caliban falls in with the drunken sailors, Trinculo and Stephano, who make him drunk. It was as if I saw represented on the stage, in dramatic form, the history of the last few years.

'TRINCULO – ROSEBERY

'Caliban stands in this scene, as elsewhere, as the representative of the democracy, robbed of its rightful inheritance, punished without end for an attempted crime, endowed with just enough education to curse its master, and abandoned by him to a condition of brutish ignorance and hopeless slavery. Such a strong brute in human shape – it is His Majesty's Caliban, not Shakespeare's I am speaking of – when, wearied with endless burdens, sees approaching another creature whose shape at least recalls his master. Instantly he anticipates nothing but a renewal of torture, a fact sufficiently significant of how Prospero had tormented him all those years, and, hoping to escape unseen, falls flat on the earth and covers himself with his spacious gabardine. The man in question is no emissary of Prospero but a witty, good-natured, intoxicated sailor, who bears a most striking

resemblance in his size and facial expression to the caricatures of Lord Rosebery. Trinculo is his name, and he fancies himself all alone on an uninhabited island, having lost all his comrades in the shipwreck. A storm is coming on overhead, and Trinculo-Rosebery, to escape the wrath of the elements and excusing himself with the adage, "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows," creeps under the gabardine of Caliban-Demos; there is no other shelter thereabouts. And there for a time they lie, Trinculo-Rosebery with Caliban-Democracy, head to feet – even as it was.

'STEPHANO – CHAMBERLAIN

'But then to him, or rather to them, enters Stephano, the incarnate representative of Jingo Toryism. His face is vinous red as befits the party of Boniface; he talks about long spoons even as Mr. Chamberlain himself, and he carries in his hand the bark-made flagon – I looked to see if it was labelled the *Daily Mail* or *Daily Telegraph* – full of the heady wine of Jingoism. At first Caliban, distrustful and restless, kicks the new-comer who marvels at the body with the two voices, "His forward voice now, is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract," a subtle allusion, in the style of Birmingham, to the different note of the Liberal League and the Liberal Party. But Stephano-Chamberlain bears no malice. He knows he has that with him which will enable him to recover control of the monster and keep him tame. So he plies the monster with fiery wine of the true Jingo brand until his poor wits go wool-gathering, and he mistakes his tempter for a god. After a while Trinculo-Rosebery rccognizes the voice of his former comrade, and is hauled out unceremoniously by his legs. "How camest thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? Can he vent Trinculos?"

'MAFEKING NIGHT

'Then we see the pitiful tragedy of the Jingo fever and the South African War. Both political parties combine to pass the bottle to the poor monster, but even while assisting at the process Trinculo, after Lord Rosebery's fashion, cannot resist a sneer at the shallow wits of the half-witted monster who swallows with trusting simplicity the absurd stories and the heady liquor of his "Brave god." Nevertheless, despite the Roseberian gibes and sneers, the poor scurvy monster

kisses the foot of the Jingo Party, and finally the scene ends with a deliriously drunken dance, in which Caliban-Democracy, supported by Trinculo-Rosebery and Stephano-Chamberlain, howl in maudlin chorus:

> ' "'Ban, 'Ban, Ca – Caliban,
> Has a new master – get a new man."

'As the curtain fell amidst the roars of laughter I remembered I had seen it all before on a much larger scale. It was Mafeking night over again.

'THE KHAKI ELECTION OF 1900

'After Mafeking we have a still further development of the close parallel. Caliban-Demos, being now well drunk with Jingo wine, takes the lead. Just as Mr. Chamberlain himself shrank with reluctance from the policy of farm burning and concentration camps which was nevertheless pressed on ruthlessly by a populace maddened by its daily drench of Jingo journalism, so Caliban incites his drunken god Stephano to murderous exploits. "Monster," says the sailor sententiously, "I will kill this man; his daughter and I will be king and queen –" and in that saying I seemed to hear the decision proclaimed to annex the Boer Republics!

'In the next scene, in which the worthy trio appear, we have the true and faithful presentment of the Khaki Election of 1900, in which the drunken Caliban, despite the scoffing of Trinculo, in humbly abject fashion licks the shoe of Stephano.

'THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1905

'But the play does not end here. For in the last scene of the last act we have a prophetic forecast of the General Election of 1905, when poor Caliban, after having suffered many things in his drunken delirium, suddenly comes to his senses, and seeing the majestic presence of his master, exclaims:

> ' "I'll be wise hereafter.
> And seek for grace. What a thrice double-ass
> Was I to take this drunkard for a god,
> And worship this dull fool!"

'That prefigures a three-figure Liberal majority next year, at the very least.'

After this long digression Stead comes back to the play – to the Harpies interlude, to the Masque, and to the last scene of all:

'Ariel is liberated and Caliban – poor Caliban – forgiven. Awe-struck and penitent, the monster humbly prostrates himself before the feet of Miranda and with the lips which had kissed the foul shoe of his drunken sailor-god, he reverently touches the hem of her garment. It redeemed much, although Miranda gave no sign of any emotion but that of shuddering horror. When amid sweet music the good ship sails away, Caliban runs to the shore, and climbing a hill watches its departure. The white sails recede towards the far horizon, and Caliban climbs to a still higher peak, and the last we see of him is that vast solitary figure on the mountain top stretching out unavailing arms to the sky.

'It is an admirable scene, bringing a long-continued series of beautiful spectacles to a solemn and majestic close, and leaving to us who witnessed it abundant matter for speculation as to the thoughts of that sombre form of him who was indeed a thing of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'

And the article finishes on a note of enthusiasm. The production of 'The Tempest' by Mr. Tree and his company in such a fashion 'is a national service and well deserves national recognition. If all plays are like this play, then the prejudice against the theatre is absurd.'

But, as he was, of course, prepared to find, all plays were not like 'The Tempest.' His second experience was with 'a mere historical harlequinade.' His third, as he himself expressed it, landed him 'in the Abyss of Lost Souls.' The piece was 'A Wife Without a Smile,' by Pinero,[1] and what astonished Stead was that he found himself laughing at its improprieties:

'Yes, I laughed – laughed heartily, as I suppose men laughed at the plays of Wycherley and Congreve and other comedies of the Restoration, and it was none the less a moral degradation to have been made to laugh at the effacement of the Divine Image of God in man, and worse still in woman. There is a comic side to everything, no doubt. Unclean humorists have before now made side-splitting jokes about the mystery of the Annunciation, and men and women once

[1] One of Sir Arthur Pinero's least fortunate plays. It met with wide disapproval and had only a short run.

roared with laughter at the antics of fellow-creatures who were bereft of reason. But to be made to laugh at such a spectacle as that which Mr. Pinero presents at Wyndham's Theatre is humiliating to one's self-respect. You feel you have been made an accomplice to an insufferable affront to your higher nature.

'Such a play explains and goes far to justify the attitude of the Puritan to stage plays. If all plays were like Mr. Pinero's play, then the Puritans would be right. It is as inhuman a performance as was the old practice of turning out some poor natural to display his witless inanity and naked obscenity for the amusement of carousers after dinner. At first I was inclined to regard it as a mere Punch and Judy show of extravagant and farcical nonsense. It is called a comedy in disguise. It would be better described as a tragedy disguised as a roaring farce. For the characters in the piece, with the exception of John Pullinger, the biscuit manufacturer, and the servants who wait at table, are, one and all, creatures who have not even so much semblance of decent humanity or morality or soul left in them as remained in poor Caliban. They are well dressed, vulgar, banal unrealities, puppets in the outward semblance and apparel of human beings, but who are, one and all, miserable frivols, the smartness of whose conversation only emphasizes the absence of anything that can be described as a heart, a mind, or a soul. The glitter of the dialogue is but like the phosphorescent shimmer over the putrefying body of the dead.'

I shall not catalogue the plays which followed during that winter, nor shall I attempt to trace Stead's progress as a playgoer during the subsequent years. Suffice it to record that the catfish continued to keep things lively in the tank!

## IV

### STEAD AT FIFTY-FIVE: A WOMAN'S PORTRAIT

There was probably not a week in Stead's life between 1885 and 1912 in the course of which he was not 'interviewed' at least once for some newspaper or periodical. Being the most 'accessible of editors' (a phrase applied to him times without number), and being, also, the kindest of men, he was always delighted in his way to help his brothers – and sisters – of the Press. In many weeks he would give a dozen 'interviews' for publication in England, on the Continent, and

in America. A haphazard but, I imagine, fairly representative collection of some scores of these has been preserved among Stead's papers – I have cited passages already from four or five of them. One other example deserves our attention now – an interview in 1904 from the pen of Mrs. Maud Churton Braby, a brilliant young journalist [1] who had long delighted in the *Review of Reviews*, but had not previously made the acquaintance of its editor. It was written for a now extinct weekly, entitled *The World of Dress*, edited by Mrs. Aria, a lady well-known for her wit.[2]

I shall reproduce Mrs. Braby's article almost in full. Nowhere else have I seen so well summed up Stead's lifelong attitude towards women in everyday social intercourse, and the article gives us a really admirable picture of him as he was now, at fifty-five, younger at heart than most men of half that age but almost a patriarch in appearance – a blend, shall we say, of Moses and Santa Claus. Stead himself recognized that Mrs. Braby in these lively paragraphs portrayed him 'to the life,' and he sent her afterwards one of his photographs inscribed – 'To the best interviewer I have ever met!'

The article begins:

'I had rather dreaded interviewing Mr. W. T. Stead. A chill remembrance of a *tête-à-tête* years ago with a prominent Salvation Army leader still lingered in my mind, and I feared the interview with Mr. Stead might resemble it. My imagination depicted a stern, rugged, elderly individual who, metaphorically speaking, would breathe hell-fire upon me and rage against the wicked follies of the world in general, and of my unregenerate sex in particular. The prospect of broaching so frivolous a subject as Dress to him was terrifying in the extreme. Any topic of conversation more mundane than spirit draperies, say, at the very worst, would seem an insult to the strenuous atmosphere of Mowbray House.

'Judge of my astonishment when – arriving several hours after the appointed time – I encountered, on the steps of that august building, a joyous gentleman whose white beard alone hinted at advancing years, whose cheerful, healthy countenance glowed with the joy of living, in whose bright blue eyes there shone a fire that would not

[1] Author also of *Downward*, the novel alluded to on p. 228.

[2] There are some pleasant remarks about Stead – 'that Jehovah among Journalists,' as she calls him – in Mrs. Aria's very entertaining volume of Memoirs published in 1922.

have disgraced Endymion, and whose whole mien was one of overflowing, irresponsible gaiety and innocent gladness.

'"Is this what you call the morning?" he asked smilingly, as his portmanteau was hoisted into the waiting hansom. "I'm just off to Stratford-on-Avon, to the Shakespeare festival. You shall come too – as far as the station. And on the way you shall tell me your views on THE subject of which among all others I know least – Dress. That's the whole secret of successful interviewing – for the interviewer to talk all the time."

'Having delivered himself of this dictum, Mr. Stead proceeded, to my great relief and delight, to talk steadily for the next twenty-five minutes.

'"This Kodak," he began, taking his seat in the hansom, and indicating an extremely battered leather object which he carried, "this Kodak might be said to be typical of my views on Dress. I have had it so many years that they no longer make the films to fit it. I like old things – old books, old friends, old clothes. I wear my clothes until they are literally unwearable – until my wife forces new ones upon me, which I accept in groaning and lamentation of spirit. . . . Yes, my wife always buys my clothes; she sends for materials and drives me to the tailor's. When they are made, I try them on with reluctance. They're always cut on the same pattern, of course, and as it's a good many years since that pattern was taken, why, the tailor has to let them out accordingly!" And he beamed upon me like a young Apollo!

'"Surely you wouldn't wish women to choose their costumes in the same way?" I interposed hurriedly, taking advantage of the temporary breathing space caused by the beaming process.

'"Ah, women's clothes! That's a saddening thought. Meredith was right when he said that woman was the last animal to be civilized by man! How selfish you are, how deficient in the instinct of social altruism! Now, take women's hats. For the last six months I've been going to the theatre, you know."

Mrs. Braby knew – who did not?

Stead proceeded to hold forth on 'those dreadful matinée hats' and the discomfort they had given him.

'"I think it terribly sad," he continued, "that woman, the loveliest object we have in the world – the most beautiful thing that God has

created, should go about tricked out and disfigured by all the barbaric arts of the milliner."

'Here I anxiously scanned the narrow strip of mirror at the side of the hansom, and then noted with relief that the Endymion-like blue eyes were twinkling. The Mentor of Mowbray House evidently realizes the importance of the "great task of happiness."

' "How would you wish women to dress, then?" I asked.

' "Well, my two pet aversions are the wasp-waist and the trained walking-skirt. The Greek draperies might be too cold for this climate, but they would be no more inconvenient than those insane long skirts which offend my sense of cleanliness. The modern woman walking in a long skirt has either to act as a street sweeper or else practically amputate her left arm – for all the use it is to her."

' "And have you any opinion on the increasing extravagance of modern fashion?"

' "Extravagance is purely relative. If you only have 12*s.* 6*d.*, and you pay 13*s.* for a dress, it is extravagance, though the gown itself might be wholly vile. If you have £30,000 a year, and you spend a thousand of it on your clothes, you are not so extravagant as you would be in the other case. Now, my whole idea of the Dress Question in a nutshell is, firstly, that it should be healthy, warm, and comfortable; and, secondly, that it should be capable of being put on and off in the minimum of time. For instance, from the bath to the doorstep I can dress from top to toe in four minutes. What do you think of that?"

' "Brilliant," I murmured, "how *do* you manage it?"

' "Well, I strive to realize my ideal! To continue: thirdly, that it should last. It should last a very long time. Now, I have worn a pair of trousers at my country place for seven years."

' "Marvellous!" I commented.

' "Wasn't it? I didn't wear them *all* the time, you understand, not quite all, but off and on very nearly the whole seven years."

'I was suitably impressed by this record of trousers-endurance.

' "All trousers should be capable of being patched," continued Mr. Stead, solemnly, but still with that air of overflowing gaiety. "They should have leather seats. Now, you know my whole views of Dress – warm and comfortable, easy to assume, capable of great endurance, and after that to be as nice-looking as you can afford – don't you think that an excellent ideal?"

'"For you, perhaps – –"

'"Well, apropos of that point of view, a lot of men were once talking about me at a literary club, and some thought I was somebody, and some that I was nobody, and then a friend of mine settled my claims to distinction by saying: 'Well, when all's said and done, Stead's the only man in London who dares dress as he does!' You see, I wear exactly what I choose, a privilege peculiar to beggars and to dukes."

'"I see. Morally, you're a duke?"

'"No, I wouldn't say that, because dukes are often very immoral, but I'm a sartorial kind of duke!" Here Mr. Stead positively roared with laughter.

'"And as for women's clothes," he continued, "having fulfilled the above requirements in their attire, they should try in addition to look as charming as possible. Now, at this point, *I* ought to interview *you*, because I know nothing about being charming, whereas you, obviously. . . ." Modesty here dictates the omission of Mr. Stead's remarks. Then he suddenly asked: "Am I not a flirtatious person?" – *so* astounding me by this unexpected ebullition of joyousness that I nearly fell out of the cab. "It's one of my theories," he continued, "that nothing so adds to the innocent gaiety of the world as harmless flirtatiousness. . . . Yes, and I always get on splendidly with women. Shall I tell you why? The whole secret of getting on well with women is to be absolutely faithful to one's wife. Yes, and to be so entirely innocent in your relations with women all your life that you can meet them on terms of absolute equality and friendship – just as one can another man."

'"Are you always as young as this, Mr. Stead?"

'"How old do you think I am? Seventy-five, I hope, for the reputation of my beard."

'"About twelve," I answered.

'"Twelve? Much too old, except by an almanac. A man once said of me, 'Why, Stead's a mere child' – to which another friend replied, 'Stead a child, why, he's an infant, he's not weaned yet!'"

'And Stead enlarged a little on the value to him of his white beard – it had won him the deference he had never been able to get before.

'"But despite my white beard and five-and-fifty years, I grow younger and younger every decade, although now I'm a grandfather. I've six children and two grandchildren; and, I say," he went on eagerly, "do you know the reason why new-born babies wear long

clothes? Once I imagined it was to allow room for the baby's growth. I soon discovered, however, that by the time the length was right, the garment was too small at the top. Then at last I found out the true purpose of those long skirts. They were invented to enable the young father – or the younger grandfather – to swing the baby head downwards. Yes, I've done that to all my children, and consequently they learnt early to look at life from two points of view."

'"*Do* be serious, Mr. Stead, what do you suppose Mrs. Aria will say to all this? We're nearly at the station; now do say something about Dress for my interview."

'"Dress? But, good gracious, we've discussed the dress-topic threadbare; I've told you everything I think and know, and all I feel about Dress – what more can I do?"

'I gave it up in despair, and wondered for the fiftieth time during the last twenty minutes why I had ever imagined Mr. Stead to be a stern, pious person.

'"But I am pious – very pious," he assured me, when I had confided this thought to him. "Why should piety be incompatible with flirtatiousness,which, as I've already explained to you, is the secret of true, innocent gaiety, and an inexhaustible spring of the joy of life?"

'"I don't know why it should be, but it certainly is, as a rule."

'"Then that's not true piety. All nice people are pious. To be nice is to be a Christian on the surface. . . . Here we are at the station; I *am* sorry. Don't go yet, my wife and daughter are here somewhere. . . . Well, I'm delighted to have had this cheery talk, we must meet again. Come to lunch – I shall never forget you. Ah, there's Mother, how surprised she'll be to see you. . . . Mother, here's a young lady I never saw in my life till half an hour ago, and she's been interviewing me about – er – Dress."'

## V

### 'HERE AM I, SEND ME'

The year which had begun so miserably for Stead ended quite triumphantly with the success of the *Review of Reviews* Annual, 'Here am I, send me!' – one of his many efforts to expound and illustrate in fiction his ideals as a social reformer. Although crude in conception and written too hastily, like all Stead's books, it found many admirers among readers whose appreciation was worth having. A letter from

General Smuts was one of the most interesting. He had found the Annual, he said, a most absorbing piece of work and he was inclined to believe that 'the primitive Christian Gospel' which inspired it was more likely 'to work a cure' for the ills of the modern world 'than any other palliation.' But if a great prophet 'nurtured not in Hebrew lore but in all the wealth of knowledge such as we have acquired' should appear to-day, he would probably find things ripe for even greater change than Christianity ever wrought.

The most enthusiastic reader of all was Dr. Clifford – I give his words in full:

'25 SUNDERLAND TERRACE,
'BAYSWATER, W.
'*Nov.* 24, 1904.

'W. T. Stead, Esq.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'I have just finished, "Here am I, send me." It is the best thing you have yet done. It is your autobiography: the picture of your ideals, beliefs, spirit, and purposes: it has your vivid perception that the value of life is in its use to others: it supplies the modern interpretation of the Christianity of Jesus Christ in a most arresting and impressive setting. It shows that whilst Christianity may be a philosophy for a few, an exclusive 'Church' for others, and a way to personal peace and comfort for the majority; its present-day business is the creation of a social institute for the service of man in all the depth and width of his needs. It will offend some; probably many, by its blunt directness of speech, and its freshness of thought. It will wound those who cannot think of Christianity except in the conventionally reverent moulds of the past. The tone here and there is hard and harsh. But it is based on the true Christian idea, and expresses the deepest meaning of the Incarnation.

'One thing is lacking in the picture. You have followed too completely the idea of Emerson, that "Action is Education," and so given too scant a place to the forces of the intellect.

'The story will have a wide circulation and do great good.

'But when the first issue is exhausted, you should print it as a cheap book, say a sixpenny, and give it wings throughout the world.

'I am sincerely yours,
'(*Signed*) JOHN CLIFFORD.'

## CHAPTER 28

## THE LAST YEARS. 1905–1912

STEAD'S activities throughout the concluding seven years of his life were as varied as ever; no previous seven years saw him more full of faith and ardour and energy; but in this 'last phase,' if he won many new friends and admirers, he added little to his renown. He revisited Russia and was the witness there of memorable events: he took a foremost place in the exchange of visits between German and English editors in 1906 and 1907; he resumed his project of a great international 'Peace Pilgrimage' and attended a Peace Congress in New York as well as a second Peace Conference at The Hague: all this without relaxing his life-long efforts on behalf of the British Navy. In 1911 he put his whole soul into an attempt to prevent war between Italy and the Turks. And from first to last he remained more than ever absorbed in the Spooks. That was his record in a nutshell. It need not, I think, be expanded here beyond the limits of a single chapter. The mass of unpublished documents available which bear upon this period will be turned to better account some years hence, perhaps, in a volume or two of memories and letters. They would not tell us much about Stead himself that we do not know already, but they would make a very curious and entertaining and valuable book.

### I

### STEAD'S RUSSIAN ADVENTURE OF 1905

Stead's interest in Russian affairs was never more intense than in 1905, that crucial year for the Tsardom. Week after week, month after month, in the Press generally, and in his own *Review*, he championed the Tsar and the Russian people alike against their hostile critics, and he seldom exhibited more courage and originality than in the way in which in August, September, and October he plunged about in the whirlpool of Russia's dangerous politics on the very eve of Revolution. Nor did he ever regret the efforts he put forth that Autumn, although they ended in failure, the Russian Liberals ridiculing and resenting his methods as ill-conceived and misguided.

While everyone else in England was holding up his hands in horror

at the dreadful scene on the Neva in January, 1905, Stead in the *Review of Reviews* set out to demonstrate that it was merely our own 'Bloody Sunday' writ large – that the Russia of the moment was but a kind of Brocken spectre, wherein the English Tory might see 'the faithful, if hideous, reflection of his own features.' What was it that sent 60,000 strikers on their mad pilgrimage of despair to the Winter Palace and that strewed the streets of so many manufacturing towns in Russia with the corpses of working men shot down in the restoration of order? Hunger! And to what was their hunger due? To Protection, to war *à la* Chamberlain (the Russo-Japanese war was then in full progress), and to all the other concomitants of Toryism, with its natural progeny of starvation and despair.

Our 'Bloody Sunday,' Stead goes on to maintain in the article which I am citing,[1] was a greater blot upon civilization than the tragedy of the Russian capital. It might sound incredible to the Englishmen who had been 'screaming themselves hoarse over the monstrous barbarity of the Russian Government,' but it was the fact that the English police in 1887 'did not even give the unfortunate processionalists an opportunity to disperse peaceably.' And he recalls some of the ugly details of that occasion. 'Nothing' he continues, 'but the forbearance of our workmen saved London from a massacre as bloody as that which took place at St. Petersburg. The Government was determined to hold the Square against the people at all costs. If the London processionalists had been as resolute as those of St. Petersburg the streets of London would have run with blood. Our Tories did not intend to hestitate to shoot in case of need. But our workmen recoiled before the fixed bayonets of the Guards, and the Tories got their way with only a couple of victims killed and several hundred injured.'

Having elaborated and enforced this comparison with the help of many details, Stead draws an equally effective parallel between the character and circumstances of the Tsar and those of the British Prime Minister, showing first, that the alleged 'mystery' of the Tsar's absence from St. Petersburg was entirely an absurd invention (Nicholas II. being habitually at Tsarkoë Selo, the Russian Windsor, at that period of the year), and proceeding to point to the resemblance between the Muscovite sovereign and the English statesman. Both

[1] *Review of Reviews*, February, 1905.

men might have been too ready with the word of command, 'Do not hesitate to shoot,' [1] but both were by nature humane and sensitive, and both impressed you 'as philosopher rather than a ruler'; and just as Mr. Balfour held office only by avoiding an open breach with Mr. Chamberlain, so the Tsar could wield his sceptre only if supported by people with whom he had no kind of sympathy. Transfer Mr. Balfour's situation to St. Petersburg and 'you have the Tsar's position made as clear as noonday,' Stead concludes:

'The Tsar is a modern man. He hates war, detests intolerance, and is at least as much devoted to Liberal ideas as Mr. Balfour is devoted to Free Trade. But the Tsar, like Mr. Balfour, has to take into account other forces than his own personal convictions. Russia is a vast bureaucracy. Besides the bureaucracy, there are the Grand Dukes, and the Church. Consider the Grand Duke Vladimir as the Mr. Chamberlain of the situation, with M. Pobodonostsoff as the representative of the Church, and you may begin to form some conception of how it is the Tsar does not make sweeping reforms. He does not do it for the self-same reason that Mr. Balfour does not do it. No one in this world, least of all the Autocrat of All the Russias, lives in a vacuum. On him, even more than on other men, weighs the constant pressure of old, rugged, and massive forces, against which that Russian Titan, Peter the Great, dashed himself in unavailing despair. Nicholas II is not a Peter the Great. But Peter himself, in the present circumstances, would find it no easy task to maintain his position except by a series of Balfourian balancings. The Tsar stands to the Zemstvoes very much as Mr. Balfour stands to the Duke of Devonshire and the Unionist Free Fooders. Nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see much of their programme carried out, but if he were to say so – still more, if he were to do anything to give effect to their views – he would have a bad quarter of an hour with Mr. Chamberlain, or, in the case of the Tsar, with the Grand Dukes. If the Russian Army had been victorious, the Tsar would have been in a stronger position. But, unfortunately for him, it has not been victorious, and his Grand Dukes are not above reminding him that it was his infatuated devotion to peace which is responsible for all Russia's disasters.

[1] Words used by Mr. Balfour as Chief Secretary for Ireland at the time of the Mitchelstown riot.

'Thus in Russia to-day we can see, as in a magic mirror, not only the principles of Toryism, but even the Tory Prime Minister. Those of us who have spent our lives in combating Toryism at home may, if we see fit and have nothing more profitable to do, with clear conscience, denounce the way in which Tory principles translate themselves into practice abroad. But that the London newspapers which exulted in the "Bloody Sunday" of Trafalgar Square, who are clamouring for the adoption of Protection, and who are the sworn champions of Mr. Balfour – for these organs of public opinion to assume airs of pharisaic virtue and preach Liberalism day by day to the Tories of St. Petersburg – that I must confess would be revolting if it were not so irresistibly humorous. After all, it is only a repetition for the thousandth time of the old farce of Satan reproving sin.'

That was Stead's tone throughout the months that followed, always eager to establish the best case for Russia, to silence her maligners, to herald her successes and to foretell good things for her. None rejoiced more whole-heartedly than he when, on August 19, the edict went forth constituting the Duma, a representative Assembly for the whole of Russia, excluding Finland. And when, ten days later, Russia and Japan concluded peace, upon terms humiliating for the Russians although generally held creditable to the victorious nation, Stead was swift to lay stress on the brighter side of the picture.

' "Sweet are the uses of adversity," he declared, "to nations as well as to individuals. Defeats have often ministered more than victories to the permanent well-being of States. Joan of Arc, in driving England out of France, was one of our greatest national benefactors. And George Washington, in defeating the purblind Toryism of George III and his advisers, practically founded the British Empire as we know it to-day. From an impossible despotism he transformed it, thenceforth, more and more into a fraternal federation of self-governed States. In the same way Russia may hereafter be grateful for her reverses in the Far East. The Duma is worth more than a dozen Manchurias." '

Stead, accompanied by his friend Colonel Brocklehurst (a *persona grata* at the Russian Court), had arrived at St. Petersburg on the eve of the declaration of peace, and, jubilant himself, was surprised

to find most of his Russian friends in a state of gloom. In order to console and cheer them he elaborated this thesis as to the 'uses of adversity,' and he was delighted to see his words printed in full, first in Russian in Prince Ouktomsky's paper, *Razwiet* (*The Dawn*), afterwards in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, in French.

But the Russian Liberals would not listen to him. 'It was a stupidity, this war, nay, a crime,' said one of them, 'but we have come out of it even more foolishly than we went into it.' And the Duma! What would be the use of a Duma under such a despotism as still existed in Russia? At that very moment one of their leaders, Professor Miliukoff,[1] was confined in the Wyborskaia Prison, 'on suspicion of contemplating political crime.'

It was on Tuesday, September 9, that Stead got to business, so to speak. He had had two long talks with the Tsar, who had encouraged him to address conferences on the subject of the Duma, but he had been assured on all sides that the Tsar's permission was worth nothing unless it were countersigned by his omnipotent Minister of Police General Trepoff, the Dictator *de facto* over the Empire – 'the man of the iron hand and the stony heart . . . the coarse, vulgar, illiterate boor, the only instrument at once brutal enough and strong enough to serve the turn of an autocrat in despair': so Trepoff was described to him.

To his surprise and relief he found General Trepoff not merely 'courtesy itself' but a man of thought and some eloquence. 'Perhaps Mr. Stead would like to hear my political ideas?' the 'illiterate boor' began, and for nearly an hour Stead listened to what seemed to him a most enlightened and broad-minded disquisition upon the state of the country – he could hardly believe his ears. A longer interview followed next day and now Stead did the talking. Was Russia to have a *Habeas Corpus* Act, or was she not? That was the all-important question. The Duma was like a horse with only three legs to stand upon – Liberty of Association, Liberty of Meeting, Liberty of the Press; without the fourth leg, Security of the Individual, it was worthless. And he taxed the Minister of Police with the case of Miliukoff. How could the professor's imprisonment be justified? It was as though the Tsar had painted a beautiful picture on a wall and called it the Duma and Trepoff had come along and smudged it all over black with a sweep's brush.

[1] So conspicuous again, eleven years later, in the Revolution of 1916.

Trepoff smiled, Stead tells us, and said he hoped very shortly to liberate Miliukoff on bail, pending his trial; in the meantime, if Stead wished, as he said, to hold meetings in St. Petersburg for the purpose of discussing the Duma and of explaining why, in the eyes of an English Radical, it should be welcomed – despite all its shortcomings – as a Parliament rich with promise for the future, General Trepoff intimated that he was quite free to do so. Stead replied that he could not say a word in favour of the Duma until Miliukoff was actually released. 'To-day is Wednesday,' he went on, 'on Sunday I intend to have my next lunch party at the Hôtel de l'Europe. I hope I shall have good news before then.'

On the Saturday evening, Comte Nicolas Sievers called at the Hôtel de l'Europe and sent in his card to Stead. He was shown in.

'Mr. Stead, I believe,' said the Comte, bowing.

'I am Mr. Stead, and you?'

'I am the *aide-de-camp* of the Governor-General of St. Petersburg. General Trepoff presents you his compliments and has sent me to tell you that Miliukoff is free.'

We can imagine Stead's feelings! It was splendid, magnificent, to have Miliukoff out of prison. His release justified Stead's confidence in the progressiveness and wisdom of the Russian authorities. The Tsar and his officials were evidently going to behave like sensible men. All that, of course. But, in addition, what an absolutely unparalleled score for Stead himself! Alas! that there should be no *Daily Paper* in which to turn it to full account.[1]

Even as things were, of course, the whole civilized world learnt next day of the triumph.

The prospects of Stead's mission were at their brightest during that week. 'The *Times* correspondent,' he wrote to his sister, Miss Mary Stead, 'who works for me as if he were on my staff, was at first very sceptical, but is now simply amazed at the good which he sees I am doing. "You've roped them all in," he exclaimed, "I do believe that you are really going to do great things for this poor country."' One of the leading members of the Zemstvo Congress had remarked to the *Times* correspondent only that morning – 'They talk about the

[1] Professor Miliukoff, while acknowledging with gratitude Stead's 'perseverance and energy' in previously securing an interview with him in prison, deprecated the idea that he was indebted to a foreigner for his actual release.

Tsar and General Trepoff, but the real Autocrat in Russia to-day – is Stead!'

But this state of things did not continue. The Russian Liberals became impatient and angry, and even those newspapers which were most favourably inclined to Stead grew critical and sarcastic. 'We, of course, do not take our stand on such a formal and narrowly patriotic point of view as that Mr. Stead is interfering in other people's business,' one of them began. 'On the contrary, come and welcome! Why should he not speak? In the first place he is a well-known publicist, a person to whom honour is due, who has done undoubted service not only to his own country, but also to Russia. During the darkest hour of Von Plehve's regime, Mr. Stead addressed an open letter to him, which went the round of the whole European (but not Russian) Press, proving the cruelty and folly of his repressive policy and of the actions of the Governor-General Bobrikoff.'

But Mr. Stead, the journal went on to say, was too 'English' to understand Russian internal politics, and the task of reconciling Russian progressives and Russian reactionaries was quite beyond his power. Even Franklin had had no such over-ambitious designs in Paris, but had gone there merely as the spokesman of the forward Party in America, which was allied to the forward party in France, 'and Mr. Stead is not a Franklin!'

The rest was failure. Dr. E. J. Dillon, who was in Russia at the time, gives the following summary of what ensued:

'Nothing daunted, he (Stead) courageously went about the country preaching patriotic co-operation and the necessity of laying down a foundation before attempting to build up a huge fabric. The difficulties he met with were formidable, the criticisms which his addresses provoked were sharp and often unjust. But, none-the-less, Russians were favourably impressed by the spectacle of this apostolic reformer, come from the distant shores of Britain to preach the gospel of modernism to the Russian moujik, and they shut their eyes to the fact that, dominated by his ethical ideals, he overlooked many of the realities of the Slav world. Some of the men who would have silenced him if they could, because he was a force in the enemy's camp, assured me that they were struck by his mysterious power of arousing sympathy and grasping the heart and the conscience of his hearers.

'During the progress of the "Revolution" he delivered a remarkable speech in Moscow in the house of Prince Dolgorouky, after which he repaired to Saratoff, where Stolypin was Governor. His activity was the object of enthusiastic comment. Menshikoff, the Prince of Russian journalists, devoted an article of two columns to Stead, holding him up as an example to Russian publicists and patriots. The extremists attacked him bitterly for not taking their side in a cause which they maintained he did not understand. Stead replied in a number of vigorous letters, of which the most telling appeared in the *Slovo* (September 27) under the heading, "Apologia pro vitâ meâ." '

Stead's intervention was a failure beyond a doubt. Could it conceivably have proved a success? According to the late M. Finot, the well-known French journalist and author, several of those Russian Liberals who made mock of their English well-wisher in 1905 as a presumptuous busybody admitted afterwards that his arguments had been sound and wise. That Dr. Dillon also remained of this opinion is shown by a brief note which he addressed in 1916 to Stead's friend and travelling companion, General Brocklehurst, who in 1914 had been raised to the peerage as Lord Ranksborough. It was in reply to the question whether he thought the Mission had been too late. 'No,' Dr. Dillon replied, 'not too late. If only the suggestions then made had been hearkened to, all that has since happened would have been averted.'

## II

### STEAD AND 'C.-B.'S' MINISTRY: AND A TALK WITH JOHN BURNS

There is a lady in *Daniel Deronda* – the book we found Stead reading so self-consciously in 1879 – who is always making Almanacks for the Millennium. That was Stead's foible, too. In 1906, when the Millennium apparently arrived in England with the biggest Liberal majority ever known, he produced, if not exactly Almanacks, at least a number of kindred publications, packed full of glowing possibilities and plans for the immediate future. Among the publications was a hundred-page pamphlet, profusely illustrated, in which he described and analysed 'Our New Rulers.'[1] It was an

[1] 'The Liberal Ministry of 1906: Our New Rulers.'

extremely entertaining *brochure* – a gossipy enlargement of the 'character-sketch' of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry which appeared in the January issue of the *Review of Reviews*.

Everyone in the slightest degree interested in politics must have read with amusement – or else with annoyance – that lively and trenchant article. A rapid glance through it will recall to us some of Stead's political likes and dislikes as well as his attitude towards some of the chief problems of the time. For Lord Rosebery as a man he had always felt affection and admiration, but Lord Rosebery's statesmanship he held in low esteem. He rejoiced, therefore, at the Liberal ex-Leader's 'self-elimination,' and he hailed 'C.-B.'s'[1] Premiership with all the greater delight in that it signified triumph not over Lord Rosebery alone, but over the three other most prominent Liberals who had lent their countenance to the war: Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane, and Mr. Asquith. It was true that these three were to be members of the New Government, as Foreign Secretary, Minister of War, and Chancellor of the Exchequer respectively; but he found comfort in the reflection that 'in each of these three offices' the 'three Liberal Leaguers' would be compelled to confront, 'day after day, week in, week out, the disastrous results of the policy which they were weak and foolish enough to support.'

Mr. Winston Churchill's appointment as Under-Secretary for the Colonies Stead welcomed warmly. 'It is an admirable arrangement,' he wrote, 'which suits everybody except Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Lyttelton, who would have preferred any other antagonist.' He applauded also the choice of Mr. Lloyd George as President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. John Burns as President of the Local Government Board. Mr. Burns he declared to be the most outstanding man in the Ministry after 'C.-B.' himself, besides being its 'only gaol-bird.' John Burns's 'progress from Pentonville prison[2] to a seat in the Cabinet' had been 'a prose-epic.' 'He is not yet fifty,' Stead continued, 'but he has done more for his class than any other workman of our time and more for London than the whole bench of Bishops and all the ground landlords put together.' And the reader was reminded how, in the second year of the Boer War, Burns,

[1] In a speech at Bodmin, Lord Rosebery had taken a line which made his retirement from public life inevitable.

[2] On account of the part he played in the Trafalgar Square Meeting of November 13, 1887, 'Bloody Sunday.' See p. 248.

'cricket-bat in hand, stood guard, from ten o'clock at night till two in the morning, at the door of his own house, ready to defend his wife and child against the howling mob of infuriated Jingoes who had smashed the windows and were threatening to loot his home in the good patriotic fashion so much admired in those days.'

After Campbell-Bannerman and John Burns, the most noteworthy Minister in Stead's eyes was Mr. Asquith, 'a handy fighting-man in the *mêlée* of parliamentary debate,' if lacking 'the stuff of which martyrs were made. . . . It would be grossly unjust to say that Mr. Asquith always shouts with the biggest crowd, but it is not his instinct to advertise his agreement with an unpopular minority.' In Sir Edward Grey – whom he was to hold up to pity and scorn a year later as the victim of 'the Tchinovniks of the Foreign Office' – Stead saw many merits, for 'despite the Jingo-strain in him,' his Imperialism (apart from the Boer War) had 'usually been well tempered by common-sense and the Ten Commandments.' In foreign politics, Grey could be trusted merely to say ditto to his predecessor, Lord Lansdowne, alike 'in coercing the Turk, sweet-hearting France and keeping step with Japan'; nor would he pander to the Germanophobes.

Proceeding to deal with the rest of the Cabinet in groups, Stead bestowed his blessing upon Mr. Bryce as Chief Secretary for Ireland, with Lord and Lady Aberdeen at Dublin Castle; Sir Anthony McDonnell's administrative genius, Stead thought, would now have full scope, no longer handicapped as it had been under Conservative rule. He would have a free hand to prepare the way gradually 'for the transfer of the whole control of Irish affairs to the Irish people.'

In the Colonial group, it was Mr. Churchill who would really count, his titular chief Lord Elgin was a respectable nonentity. With Lord Carrington and Mr. Sydney Buxton also in the Cabinet, the Colonies could rely upon sympathy, almost upon deference. South Africa, above all, had reason for relief. Her affairs would have precedence before all others.

The Indian group consisted of Mr. John Morley, who was Secretary of State, Sir Henry Fowler, who had previously held that office, and Lord Elgin and Lord Ripon, both of whom had been Viceroys. Mr. Morley would have a new India to face – an India whose inhabitants had been flushed with pride over the victories of Japan, besides being awakened to those two great resources of the weak against armed

force, the Boycott and the Strike. He would have to cope with a heritage of grave difficulties, bound up with the partition of Bengal. The educated natives of India would look to him for radical reforms. He would not have a bed of roses.

Mr. Birrell was Minister of Education. What would be his policy? The Educational group included Mr. Lloyd George, 'the most conspicuous spokesman of the Nonconformists'; Mr. Haldane, German in his outlook, a lawyer, a metaphysician, a theologian, 'a kind of Calvinistic Jesuit or Jesuitical Calvinist, who had steeped his brains in transcendental philosophy and exercised his wits in back-stairs intrigue'; Sir Henry Fowler, the Methodist, and Lord Ripon, the Roman Catholic. How they would reconcile their differences Stead could not foretell. 'The only logical solution of the religious difficulty – that of confining State education strictly to secular education, leaving the Churches free to supply religious teaching – although advocated by Sir Alfred Thomas,[1] the chairman of the Welsh party,' had no chance of being adopted, as it was repudiated by Mr. Lloyd George.

A strong Cabinet on the whole, Stead summed up, and a good Cabinet – above all a 'C.-B.' Cabinet. 'C.-B.' was its hub – all the spokes centred in him. And he was the hub, because he was 'the solidest, most seasoned, best balanced of all the Liberals, a plain, honest, respectable, good-humoured Scot, wary and canny beyond most of his countrymen'; a man, 'standing firm upon his feet, with a cool head and a warm heart,' above all a man who had always 'played the game.' 'C.-B.,' most human of mortals, will have been pleased by Stead's commendation. They had known each other for more than thirty years of public life, and had generally been fighters on the same side. Whenever they had crossed swords, it had always been *sans rancune*: the private letters in which 'C.-B.' occasionally defended himself against Stead's rebukes in the Press are models of suavity and tolerance and kindly feeling. More frequently it was to thank Stead or to applaud him, that he wrote.

In those thirty years, the political status of the two men had been changed indeed. In the middle eighties, Stead's hey-day, Campbell-Bannerman was just a Liberal 'stalwart,' scarcely known outside Whitehall and Westminster and his Scotch constituency. Behold him, now, Commander-in-Chief, and Stead beginning to be regarded

[1] Afterwards Lord Rhondda.

– for all his undiminished vigour – as a mere gallant old veteran of small account!

In the fortunes of John Burns the change was more striking still. Witness this delightful dialogue, recorded in one of Stead's notebooks, and dating from only ten months later – November 15, 1906:

'I carry my corn well,' said John Burns, 'none of these things affect me in the least.' He had been telling me about his experience the previous night at the State Banquet at Windsor, where he had been present to meet the King of Norway. He said, 'it is very remarkable. King Edward and the Queen and King Haakon talked more to me than to all the rest of the Cabinet put together. I talked to the King of Norway nearly twenty minutes, and both King Edward and Queen Alexandra were extremely kind to me. I went up the great staircase in my levee dress, saluted by the Guardsman. I reflected that the cost of my coat alone amounted to as much as fifteen months of the wages which I was earning twenty years ago. Monstrous crime, that is, to make you wear such a dress! Nineteen years ago, that very day, I was knocked down and arrested in Trafalgar Square on "Bloody Sunday," nineteen years ago exactly, that Guardsman came near thrusting me through with his bayonet. And now the wheel has come round in full circle, it was the very identical day, "Bloody Sunday!" There I was nineteen years later hobnobbing with kings!'

I asked, 'What do you think of King Haakon?'

'Not much in him,' Burns replied, 'not worth seeing again, but I will see him, of course, if he wishes to see me. I tell you there is more shrewd sense in our King's little finger than there is in King Haakon's whole body. He is a wonderful man is our King. He seems to grow shrewder every time I see him, and he keeps himself strictly within the limit of the constitutional position.'

'Will he make five hundred Peers in order to enable us to get rid of the House of Lords?'

'No,' Burns said, 'he won't do that – but he is a good fellow.'

'It was very amusing,' Burns went on, 'people remarked about my dress with my big military chest, and my slender waist. Did you ever hear what the King said about my dress to Lord Acton?'

'No,' I replied.

'When Lord Acton went to see him the King took hold of his collar and said to him: "Where did you get this dress? I have never seen a worse-fitting dress. Now, if you like, I will give you a word of advice. You go and ask John Burns who his tailor is, for there has never been a man at my levee whose dress fitted him so well as John Burns's." '

'These things,' said Burns again, 'don't have any effect upon me – these trifles.'

## III

### STEAD AND THE GERMAN EDITORS. 1906–7

To the optimists who believe in Peace (there are optimists who still believe in War) there is always something to inspirit and encourage in the exchange of such amenities as marked the visit of the German Editors to England in 1906, and that of the English Editors to Germany in 1907. In the light of the years 1914–18 it is impossible to wax enthusiastic over these visits now. Most of the Editors who took part in them – German Editors and English Editors alike – must recall them with mingled feelings. Mr. Clement Shorter, Editor of the *Sphere*, who entered thoroughly into the spirit of the hospitalities at the time, is now convinced that the excursion of 1907 was one of the most hypocritical enterprises ever known. There is bound, of course, to be a certain measure of make-believe and humbug in all such functions, but this does not mean there can be *nothing* in them except hypocrisy. Stead, who was the most active organizer of that Anglo-German demonstration of good-fellowship, was sincerity incarnate.[1] Who shall say that his infectious friendliness went to waste? In England as in Germany we may have had our cynics, but the cynics were in a minority, I suspect, in both countries. Both in London and in Berlin the convivialities were, for the most part, genuine. Hosts and guests really enjoyed themselves and, on

[1] Mr. Shorter, who had a great regard for Stead, agrees that he was one of the exceptions, in fact, the chief exception in this respect. Stead's whole bearing on that visit to Germany was in Mr. Shorter's eyes admirable. 'There were many newspaper men there of no importance who were always in the front row,' he wrote in the *Sphere* for April 17, 1912, 'but Mr. Stead was not one of these. Although I had plenty of evidence that his was the only name in the whole party known in Germany, he kept quietly in the background and won the deep regard of all the quieter and less ambitious spirits of the band.'

the whole, liked each other. Amicable relations were formed which in some cases still exist. An exchange of courtesies will not avert a world-war, but there must surely be some seed of good always in an honest effort towards international understanding.

Stead preserved a big pile of documents of all sorts connected with the various ceremonies and festivities, banquets and addresses which attended the German Editors' visit. Perhaps the most noteworthy item in the collection is an article about himself from the pen of Herr Friedrich Dernburg, whose son was to become so famous as German Colonial Minister. An extract from this, as translated into rather engagingly quaint English by some German penman, deserves transcription here:

'While circulating on an unknown shallow water it is very consoling there is a pilot on board. Fancy 50 German Journalists on the open sea of social and political life during London's high season, and you will set a value to the leader who had escorted us in safety! This leader was W. T. Stead, England's greatest journalist. It was a marvellous deed and the more I look back the more the difficulties we have got over surprises me. How many rocks may we have passed over without observing them? And if we, as I hope, got decently out of it, it was only thanks to him. I do not believe there is another man like Stead (as least I have never met him) who commands as a General and works as a Courier. I call him the Napoleon of the Journalist's campaign, and there is no exaggeration. Mr. Stead was the first to salute us in Bremen, and arriving in Southampton everybody was already acquainted and on familiar terms with him. He was the last to take farewell of us in Plymouth, and to find even after those saturated-of-impression-days a cordial word to tell us at parting. It was with his aid we were introduced to all dignitaries and men-of-State-and-letters we wanted. To him still we owe the acquaintance with journalistic people of every kind and speciality. His great reputation everywhere was as wonderful as his dexterity in discovering the right word to join people of opposite opinions. He always keeps a simple dignity with a gentle tint of humour. Broad-shouldered, rather small, a strong head with a short-cut grey beard, elastic gait, in spite he may be sixty, by appearance you would not guess the journalist – rather a Sea-Captain. It was in London as if one from 9 o'clock in the morning was riding in a carousal and only

at midnight came down having moved round the whole day. Only Stead was always the same. "You are not of flesh and blood, you are a machinery of steel and iron!" I said to him. He smiled kindly and shook hands – his shaking is also physically not so soon to be forgotten!'

Mr. Dernburg has told us as much as we need to know of the German Editors' visit. We may disregard all the junketings and speechifyings. Anybody curious to see a full contemporary record of what happened will find one in the enterprising little weekly journal conducted by Mr. Leo Weinthal, entitled *The Anglo-German Courier*, which had begun its existence in the previous January. Mr. Weinthal and Mr. Thomas Rhodes (of the Norddeutscher-Lloyd Company) – the latter a close friend of Stead's from this period onward – were among the prime movers in the whole affair.

From the English Editors' tour in Germany in the following year, Stead brought back an even greater abundance of souvenirs – notes for his own speeches in what he called 'English-German'; autograph letters from 'Celebrities' and State-Officials; magniloquent Municipal 'Addresses'; facetious and sentimental 'Toasts'; elaborately made-out programmes, etc., etc. He enjoyed it all thoroughly. Here are a few lines from the long article in the *Review of Reviews* in which he dealt with his experiences:

'Whatever we did in England last year the Germans did this year and did it better. And they did other things of which we had not thought. We did not provide them with three special opera performances. We did not improvise village festivals or have fair maidens pelt them with roses as they sat at lunch. They gave us portfolios in which to store our newspaper cuttings, and heaped souvenirs upon us wherever we went. Steamers and buildings were beflagged in our honour, cannon thundered salutes. Choral societies, hundreds strong, sang to us as we went down the Rhine. A picked quartette sang us songs of the Lorelei. Military bands played by the hour, brazen trumpets sounded martial fanfares in our honour, and at Hamburg the square in front of the Rathaus where we dined, was illuminated with coloured fire. The King of Saxony received us, and lunched us in his Castle at Pillnitz; the Prince Regent of Bavaria received us in the Schloss at Munich. The Imperial Chancellor devoted two hours to receiving us at a garden party. Courtiers and

Ministers, Burgomasters and Chambers of Commerce vied with each other in doing us honour. But nothing touched us more than the rustic welcome we received from the villages at Prien and at Stock on Lake Chiemsee. It was so simple, so hearty, so delightfully unconventional and sincere.'

Although, as Mr. Shorter and others have attested, he did not put himself forward in any way, Stead was, of course, in German eyes the one outstanding figure among the visitors – the one man whose name was everywhere known. His were the speeches to be reported and talked about, his the features to be good-humouredly caricatured. The best of the caricatures was inspired by the best of the speeches, one which Stead delivered at the Berlin Chamber of Commerce – a Pacifist's panegyric on the German Army. Here is the peroration:

'Steps towards the Federation of the World. I end as I began, by paying my respects to the German Army. I admire it because it has rendered unnecessary the maintenance of any other army within the limits of the German Empire. Nothing gives me more delight than to see how the old fortifications necessary at a time when one German State fought against another, have been replaced by beautiful parks and pleasure gardens, wherein your children play in peace and gladness. To me it is a prophecy of what is coming when the armed anarchy of a world split up into forty-six sovereign and independent States becomes a single great federation with but one army and one navy to maintain order and enforce the law. Nothing impressed me more during this visit than the sight of the Bismarck monument at Hamburg. There stands the giant keeping eternal watch and ward over the sea-gate of the great Empire which he helped to found. He was no Peace hero, but a man of war from his youth up. But he was the instrument chosen to fulfil the prayer of your national song –

Dear Fatherland, sweet Peace be thine.

By his statesmanship the frontier fringed with cannon disappeared from within the limits of the Fatherland. No longer now German seeks to take the life of his brother German. What Bismarck did for Germany some still greater Bismarck has yet to do for the entire human family.'

## IV

### THE SECOND PEACE CONFERENCE AT THE HAGUE

'The Second Hague Conference of 1907 was nearly twice as large, lasted twice as long, did more than twice as much work, and is not half as much appreciated as its predecessor.'

So Stead declared in a Preface to a history which he compiled of its labours, but he was writing argumentatively. It annoyed him to see the Second Conference generally belittled by the newspapers, and he was 'out' to defend it. It was not really more important (as he might be taken to imply) than the First Conference, and it was certainly less interesting, inasmuch as it lacked the element of novelty. A detailed account of it in these pages would have the savour of a twice-told tale.

The one serious failure in the Peace Crusade of 1899 had been in regard to the International Pilgrimage. Undeterred by that experience, Stead revived his pet project in March 1907, after a preliminary European tour of his own. In 1899 he had agreed that the state of the world was unpropitious, but now:

'Glance for a moment at the transformation that has been wrought in the world since 1898! France and England, instead of arming for instant wars, are now locked in a fraternal embrace. America and England have established a friendship so close that it is emphasized, instead of being endangered, by the folly of distraught individuals who have earthquakes on their nerves. Russia and England are establishing the *entente* for which I have been working these thirty years. Japan has fought out her quarrel with Russia, and is done with it. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty, guaranteeing the *status quo* of Asia, has freed the world from the vast and incalculable peril of Chinese partition. In the Western Continent, from the North Pole to Cape Horn, there exists no dispute pregnant with the possibility of an appeal to war. In Africa all the possessions and spheres of influence have been surveyed and delimited. In South Africa the establishment of a Botha Ministry in Pretoria puts a public seal to the reconciliation of Boer and British consequent upon our national confession of our national crime. The trouble that was brewing in 1899 between Sweden and Norway has come to a head and burst without the firing of a single gun.'

And so the incorrigible optimist proceeds, pointing in turn to

Northern Italy with its Irredentist agitation 'damped down,' to the Moroccan question adjusted by an International Conference, to the solved problem of North Schleswig, even to Alsace-Lorraine, tranquil and prosperous under German rule, and to France philosophically acquiescing in the decree of Fate!

Apart from this complete misconception of French feeling (which, of course, he shared with many other leaders of opinion in England), Stead was able, undeniably, to make out a fairly good case for his principal proposition: that Europe was in general ready to be converted to peace principles, but that some really energetic movement was essential to her conversion. Four points, he contended, should constitute the objective of any such movement:

(1) An arrest of the increase of armaments.

(2) The Government to undertake the work of Peace Societies and appropriate to peace propaganda and international hospitality £1 for every £1,000 spent per year.

(3) Refusal to call in a second, or special mediator, before making war to be punished by refusing war loans and making imports contraband of war.

(4) Arbitration to be made obligatory on all questions of secondary importance which do not affect honour or vital interests.

The Conference was to meet on June 1. In the meantime, the peoples of all countries, by means of an International Pilgrimage, should bring home to their respective governments the need for effective action at The Hague. And Stead proceeded to elaborate the plan in detail, naming the suitable representatives for the United States and Great Britain and France, and outlining the various stages of the Pilgrim's Progress through the Capitals of Europe. Perhaps it was the most grandiose idea of the kind even his brain ever conceived!

His enthusiasm was catching, and among those who responded to his appeal for co-operation were many brilliant and distinguished men and women. Typical of these was the eminent French scientist, Dr. Charles Richet, who replied in two emphatic sentences:

'*Je serais toujours avec vous. Par conséquent, sans autre phrase, je vous accompagnerai quand vous ferez ce pieux pélérinage.*'

But in some cases in which the spirit was most willing, the flesh was most weak. Sir Alfred Russel Wallace approved wholly of the pilgrim-

age, but he was in his eighty-fourth year and could not possibly take part in it. 'The round of excitement, feasting, talking, visiting' would put him *hors de combat* in a few days. Sir Hiram Maxim, of machine-gun fame, was 'decidedly in favour' of any measure for the promotion of peace among the nations of the world. 'Man's inhumanity to man,' he quoted, 'makes countless millions mourn.' If nations, like individuals, could be taught to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, it would save an infinite amount of suffering in the world. As a bad sailor, however, Sir Hiram feared he would be correspondingly bad as a pilgrim.

There were, inevitably, many other reasons for refusals, Nansen sympathized, but as a Member of the Norwegian diplomatic service (he was at the moment Norwegian Minister in London) could not participate, and M. Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, was enthusiastic, but he was tied to his observatory by urgent work.

M. Millerand recognized '*la noblesse de l'inspiration de l'idée mais –*' etc., etc. M. Briand thought the suggestion a very good one, but he had only recently returned from a year's trip and could not spare the time for another trip so soon.

So it was with many well-wishers to the scheme. But the critics and doubters and disapprovers were in a majority.

Mr. Keir Hardie, Leader of the Labour Party, felt that, while the pilgrimage 'might easily be an imposing and impressive demonstration in the cause of peace,' it might just as easily become an object of ridicule. 'If at the outset, for instance,' he wrote, 'some of your pilgrims were men who had aroused the bitter antagonism of the working-classes by their treatment of their workpeople or by the methods in which their fortunes were made, the inevitable result of their presence would be to lead to exposures in the Labour and Socialist Press of the countries visited and thus destroy the effect of the pilgrimage. Further, if in the midst of this pilgrimage some one was to quote the *Review of Reviews* as blessing Mr. Haldane's scheme for introducing militarism into our schools and universities, and encouraging it in connection with our churches, that would not make for seriousness.'

Mrs. Fawcett regretted that she could not take part. Until Woman's Suffrage was carried she could work for no other public object.

Mr. H. G. Wells thought that the project was a very interesting one, but that it would have to succeed brilliantly, and it might not so

succeed. For his own part he hesitated to join, only because he doubted his adding any weight whatever to the mission.

Mr. Bernard Shaw had never heard of a more unreasonable proposal. Here on the one hand was a small body of persons of international importance, whose time was the most valuable time in the world, and whose energies were already overtaxed with the work that lay to their hands at home. There on the other hand was a handful of merely local people: Kings, Tsars, Kaisers and the like, whose time was of no value at all, and whose profession it was to take part in local pageants and international demonstrations. Surely it was for the latter, not the former, body, to undertake the pilgrimage. If Stead would readjust his project in that obvious way, Mr. Shaw would be most happy to receive any monarchs at No. 10 Adelphi Terrace. He would do his best to put them at their ease, and would ungrudgingly give them as much good advice on the Peace question (or any other) as they might feel disposed to receive.

Lord Hugh Cecil's reply is particularly interesting, especially in this context! He had found some of Stead's suggestions attractive, but he feared the pilgrimage would not be of much use. To the present age, with its over-developed sense of humour, it would appear more comical than impressive. Nor had he much belief in that sort of method of carrying out what was really an ethical campaign. To put an end to wars would be a miracle, and miracles came from prayer and fasting, not from feasting and speechifying. There was too much of the hollow resonance of a big drum in the plan. In Carlyle's *French Revolution* (at the part about the 'feast of pikes'), Mr. Stead would see some excellent observations in that sense.

Apart from the proofs it furnished of Stead's unconquerable hopefulness and pertinacity, the Second Conference at The Hague has little biographical interest. In one respect Stead was even more conspicuous than during the First Conference, for on this occasion he published and edited a newspaper of his own, a four-page daily entitled *Le Courrier de la Conférence*, in the columns of which may be found a wonderfully 'live' and complete record of everything that happened. He had been in warm sympathy with all the British representatives in 1899, but with the Delegates in 1907 he had no patience. Alike in public and in private he ridiculed and reviled them unmercifully. Sir Edward Grey was moved to remonstrate with him very seriously for his attitude towards one of them, Sir E. Fry, but

with no good result. Indeed, Stead was as much dissatisfied with the Foreign Secretary himself as with his emissaries. 'Everything that Sir Edward Grey said to me he would do, he would appear to have told *them* (the delegates) not to do,' he wrote some years afterwards, 'and instead of leading the van of progress in the cause of peace, the British Delegates hung behind, leaving the front place to be scrambled for by Germany and the United States of America. A more miserable and scandalous *débâcle* I have seldom seen.'

But if Great Britain cut a very sorry figure, the Conference as a whole did a good deal of valuable work, as may be seen either from Stead's daily record in the *Courrier* or from the formal history of it which he compiled and to which allusion has been made.

## V

### WILLIE STEAD'S DEATH

The end of the year was to bring Stead his greatest sorrow, the death of his eldest son. It came on the night of December 14, a Saturday, after only three days' illness – 'a bad case of blood-poisoning, affecting the heart.' Willie Stead had been Acting Editor of the *Review of Reviews* throughout 1907 and his father had had it in mind that very day to make the appointment a permanent one; the two were to have met in the evening – it was to be a great occasion. Not until a quarter past eleven in the morning did Stead learn of his son's illness – he himself had been at Hayling Island during the week. 'Down to a quarter to eleven at night,' he tells us, 'I was absolutely incredulous that his life was in danger. At a quarter past eleven I saw him die.'

Disregarding 'the taunt of egotism' which he knew could be flung at him by misjudging strangers, Stead gave full vent to his grief in the January issue of the *Review of Reviews*. His son's death had recalled to him his father's death twenty-four years before, and he devoted his 'character-sketch' that month to 'My Father and my Son.' In this frank, outspoken, heart-felt composition – the first half of it written in 1884 and now reprinted – we have the Stead whom to know intimately was to love. Throughout his existence Stead made enemies by the score – by the hundred, by the thousand! Countless men and women who knew him only by his provocative writings and his ubiquitous photographs detested the very sight and thought of him.

Everything he said and did grated on them, got on their nerves, offended them, repelled them. Even among personal acquaintances who recognized his great qualities many could not abide him. To such people this unique 'character-sketch,' if only it were possible for them to read it without prejudice, might make intelligible the devotion which Stead won from his own family and from all those near to him. There is no literary art in it – no attempt at literary art. It is the writing merely of a practised journalist to whom words come easily. But it is all unmistakably genuine and the deep feeling in it is infectious. Such lines as the following must have been read with tears of sympathy by other fathers the whole world over:

'I remember when he was in his fifteenth year I parted from him. . . . When I lost sight of his dear, loving, eager, proud face, I lay back in the railway carriage and cried like a child. He was so much to me even then.'

All Stead's sons inherited something of his own independent spirit and were quite capable of opposing him in public with regard to matters on which he felt deeply. Alfred Stead startled his father once with a signed article in the *Daily Mail* full of anti-Russian animus, and one of Willie's earliest appearances in print was with a severe condemnation of Cecil Rhodes. But Willie, fortunately, was on his father's side nine times out of ten, and they worked together most happily from first to last. 'He was the nearest approach to a perfect character that I have ever known,' Stead was able to say of this eldest son of his; and Mr. Herbert Stead, the Warden of Browning Hall, Walworth, who knew Willie as an inspiring influence among the working men of that district, confirms the verdict. 'This is not the hyperbolic language of passionate bereavement.' Mr. Herbert Stead declared in an appreciation of his nephew, included in that January issue of the *Review of Reviews*, 'I said the same thing nearly a dozen years ago.'

This is Stead's own summing up of his son's career:

'His was a noble life, brief in span, but full of service from his boyhood up. Of all those who knew him as boy or man no one ever heard him say an unkind word or do an ungentle action. As one said who had worked with him, he was the ideal of a gentleman. Lovable he was and loyal, chivalrous and true in every phase of human life. "He

was the one man," said his widow to me, "who perfectly lived out all the ideals of which you have ever written."

'Mazzini was a great inspiration to him, and he owed much to Russell Lowell and Thomas Carlyle. When he was eighteen years old he wrote in a small family Christmas souvenir as the saying which had most influenced him after Prov. iii. 5, 6, these words from Carlyle's *Past and Present*: "To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier, more blessed, less accursed."

'In the spirit of that aspiration he lived to his last days on earth, and in that spirit he is living still.'

## VI

### 'TWO KEELS TO ONE': STEAD AND LORD FISHER

Everybody who cares anything about the Navy – as well as most people who read 'the books of the day' – will have made acquaintance with the two big volumes in which Lord Fisher of Kilverstone poured out, so racily and exuberantly, his opinions and ideas, reflections and recollections. In them he told most of what there was to tell about his co-operation with Stead, backed by Mr. J. L. Garvin and others, on behalf of British Naval Defences during the years 1908–11.

Upon nine political questions out of ten, Stead and Mr. Garvin were strongly opposed, but in regard to the ideal which was embodied in Stead's famous watchword, 'Two keels to one,' they were entirely in accord, and both of them saw in Lord Fisher the man to put that ideal into practice. They hailed in him a new and more scientific Nelson, great alike in strategy, in administration, and in inventiveness; and they delighted at the same time in his social qualities, his fun and 'divilmint' and good fellowship, merely smiling at the recklessness and violence and other shortcomings and defects which made him so many enemies. Readers of those memoirs of his will recall Fisher's onslaughts upon Lord Charles Beresford, 'The Circus Admiral,' as Stead, in his partisanship, once called him. 'It has always been a puzzle to me,' one of Beresford's backers once wrote to Stead, 'that, with your keen insight into character, and your knowledge of the world, you have not *yet* found out Sir John Fisher.'

The conflict between the Fisher party and the Beresford party was at its height in 1909. Fisher believed, with Stead and Garvin, in

applying the 'Two Power Standard' – the 'Two keels to one' – to the big battleships: the class of ships which, so Stead used to declare, could decide our next Trafalgar.

Beresford's point of view was thus set forth in a letter to Stead from Admiral C. C. Penrose-Fitzgerald in July of that year:

'The case presents itself to me somewhat as follows: Lord Charles, with his recent experience in command of battle fleets, wants to provide for the immediate future. He knows that battleships alone – however large and powerful they may be – do not constitute a fighting fleet, without their auxiliaries; and he has used the apt simile, that a park of heavy artillery does not constitute an army. He hears a good deal of tall talk about the "two keels to one" (excellent in theory), but he does not see that any practical steps are being taken to carry it out; and in the meantime he wants to turn what we have got, or may have in the immediate future, into a real fleet prepared for war, by providing it with the requisite auxiliaries: without which, he tells us plainly that it is not ready for war.

'He knows that if all the money is spent on "Dreadnoughts" (which of course make the greatest show) it cannot also be spent upon the other things which he considers of even more importance for the immediate efficiency of the fleet. He knows that many of our "pre-Dreadnought" ships are still of great fighting value, *if* they are supplemented by their light cavalry, mounted infantry, etc., but not without: and his programme appears to me to be reasonable, definite, necessary and eminently practicable. I do not think it was at all necessary for Lord Charles to jump on the "two keels to one" proposition in the way that he did; and it was certainly indiscreet of him to tread on the tail of your coat by doing so. But as he is a countryman of mine I do not feel that I can quite condemn him; for even in these days of piping peace and arbitration, without a cloud in the sky, it may be well for us that we still have some fighting men amongst us. We *may* want them.'

It is unnecessary here to go into the details of the discussion or to follow its subsequent course. Eventually, the Fisher view prevailed. To recall Stead's ideas on the main question, the necessity of Great Britain having a Navy twice as strong as Germany's, it will suffice to cite a letter which he addressed to the *Daily Chronicle* on November 8, 1910, and in which he expressed himself very clearly and succinctly:

'Sir, – I have read your special correspondent's letter from Berlin with the attention which it deserves. I need hardly say that I am entirely at one with him in desiring that we should, as a nation, do everything to Germany that we should wish Germany to do to us were our places changed. The golden rule is not only good morals, but good business.

'It is because I wish to do this that I have always been frank and outspoken on the question of armaments. We have been playing the beggar-my-neighbour game for several years now, and, to judge from your correspondent's letter, must continue to go on playing it until an agreement is arrived at on all possible political and commercial questions which may arise in the future between us and Germany. I want to stop that game in our interest as much as in the interest of Germany. But how can it be stopped?

'It has always seemed to me that the responsibility for continuing the beggar-my-neighbour game rests upon the nation that endeavours to alter the naval *status quo* to its own advantage and to the detriment of its neighbour. Letting bygones be bygones, how do we stand to-day?

'As the result of the policy in which each nation has done its utmost to protect its own interests without regard to its neighbour, we spend £40,000,000 a year on our Navy, and Germany spends £20,000,000. That is the naval *status quo* measured by a financial standard.

'Speaking for my country, I say I am ready to accept this as the normal and proper proportion of naval preponderance between the two powers. We have arrived at it by the rough and ready test of each doing the best we can for ourselves. It corresponds fairly with the comparative seaboard, oversea commerce, Colonies, etc., of Britain and Germany. If the Germans will agree to reduce it by 10, 20, or 50 per cent, I would gladly do the same. But if they increase their naval estimates we must maintain the *status quo*. That is to say, for every fresh pound they spend we are bound to spend two or abandon the *status quo* by allowing Germany to improve her position at our expense.

'This seems to me a fair basis for a working agreement whether carried out downwards by a friendly arrangement or carried out upwards by a continuance of the beggar-my-neighbour policy.

'We are for the *status quo*. If we cannot secure it by agreement we have no option but to maintain it by competition. That is the

pacificist's basis for the policy of two keels to one, or, if you prefer it, of two pounds to one.'

More interesting, to-day, than Stead's and Fisher's arguments are the relations between the two men. A most enthusiastic character-sketch of the famous Admiral written by Stead earlier in that year came as a kind of culmination to their friendship of a quarter of a century. Besides giving an admirable portrait of Fisher, the man, it comprised a most telling defence of his whole career, and tabulated more than thirty important naval reforms which he had introduced. Fisher was intensely gratified by this skilful and very outspoken glorification. On his first reading of it in proof, he was even a little alarmed. 'It is appalling, what you have written!' he exclaimed in a short note, dated February 1. 'How the old women will sit up and Beresford & Co. will curse!' The article will be found in the *Review of Reviews* for February, 1910.[1]

## VII

### THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. COOK

The comedy of Dr. Cook's triumphant reception at Copenhagen in 1909 as discoverer of the North Pole, and of his ultimate unmasking and complete discomfiture, made one of the most amusing episodes in Stead's life. Let us recall it, scene by scene.

First we have Stead all agog to meet the Great Man:

'I am telegraphing,' he cables to the *New York American*, 'just as I am leaving London for Copenhagen to meet Dr. Cook. . . . London is talking of nothing else. . . . There is no jealousy, no envy – nothing but an overwhelming feeling of satisfaction that, if the

[1] A story which Fisher told of Stead, although most people know it already, ought, perhaps, to be included here. The following is a concise version of it given by Mr. A. G. Gardiner in the *Daily News* for April 17, 1912: '"Stead may be a little mad," said Lord Fisher to me once, "but he is the first of journalists. I know, because he beat me so hollow in a match in which I had all the cards. It was when the Prince of Wales returned from Canada. I took every precaution to keep the Press at bay. Stead hired a little dinghy, came up to the warship in the twilight, scrambled up the ladder – a daring feat for an elderly landsman – got on deck, marched along with his own superb assurance, talked to officers who never dreamed that such an air could belong to an intruder, returned, tumbled down the ladder, and gave his paper the only great story that appeared in the Press next day."'

greatest prize left in the lucky bag of the planet was not to fall to a Britisher, it should have fallen to an American. For in all that Americans do of good or of evil the British feel their share.'

Next we have the doubts and the anxieties of the Danish Government and of Dr. Maurice Egan, the distinguished American Minister at Copenhagen. Had Dr. Cook really discovered the Pole? Stead in the *Review of Reviews* for September 1909, tells us how the members of the Danish Cabinet discussed the matter:

'Reports received from their representatives in Greenland,' he says, 'seemed to them to justify their according to Dr. Cook an official welcome. He was no adventurer. He was certified as a reputable American. He had formally and publicly stated that he had discovered the Pole. His letter describing his journey did not seem, except for one or two obvious misprints, otherwise than a trustworthy narrative of how the Pole was discovered. Some day or other the Pole must have been discovered very much in the way that Dr. Cook said he found it. Old Arctic explorers – who abound in Denmark – thought his narrative prima facie worthy of credence. So it was decided that a reception committee should be formed; that the Government, the Geographical Society, the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce, should take part in his welcome; that the Crown Prince should be the first to welcome Dr. Cook to Denmark.

And he explains how this decision, when notified to Dr. Egan, necessarily modified the attitude of aloofness he (Dr. Egan) had at first intended to take up. If the Danish Government, to which he was accredited, decided that there was prima facie evidence to justify them in according an official welcome to an American citizen, it was obvious that he, an American Minister, must avoid any action which might be quoted in after years to prejudice the claim of the United States to the North Pole.

Then comes the great scene of the hero's arrival, as described by Stead:

'A roar of cheering went up as Dr. Cook, taking off his cap, stood for a moment and bowed his acknowledgments of the welcome. There was no mistake as to his identity. The whole interest of the thousands of eyes centred on his brown and weather-beaten face. The Man from the North Pole, whose hand we grasped with words of

welcome, had a well set-up figure about five feet eight inches in height. His hair was sandy-brown, rather coarse in texture. He wore a moustache, but no beard. If the points of his moustache were turned upward, he might, as his portrait shows, be mistaken for the German Emperor – if that war lord could ever be conceived in a loose dark grey slouch morning coat, a sailor's cap, and moccasined feet. His blue eyes seemed at first a little dazed at the sight of the cheering multitude. A lady thrust a bouquet of roses into one hand. In the other he carried his cap. Then slowly, as he began to advance up the few steps that led from the landing, the Crown Prince bade him au revoir, and stepped with some difficulty through the crowd. Another moment and it would have been too late.

'For the eager multitude, no longer restrained by the police who mysteriously vanished – all save one short but gallant unit – surged down upon Dr. Cook, cheering and crowding him backwards. I was immediately behind him when the crowd burst, and seeing that he was ill-prepared for a scrimmage, I flung my arms round him under the armpits, and pressing backwards with all my weight, I somewhat eased the pressure from behind. In front the solitary constable fought his way like a Trojan, followed closely by Minister Egan; behind him came Dr. Cook. Another journalist, Mr. Weil, of Berlin, the American representative of an English paper, came to our help, and the four of us, surrounding the human centre of the press, struggled, staggering, swaying hither and thither amid the cheering, excited throng. Dr. Cook had to give up his flowers; one of his cuffs was torn off and carried away as a trophy; once or twice it seemed as if we should be carried off our feet, but although one man fell he was not trampled on.'

And, as Scene IV, we have the dauntless explorer, this new peril past, in safe anchorage at the American Legation:

'When Dr. Egan saw Dr. Cook face to face he liked him. And when he got to know him he liked him still more – an experience by no means confined to Dr. Egan. He felt that Dr. Cook was an honest man and a good American. Believing that, he treated him with the lavish hospitality which no one knows better how to dispense than a warm-hearted American whose father hails from Tipperary.

'As a start, finding that the returning explorer literally possessed no more clothes than those in which he stood on his moccasined feet, his first service was to rig him out in a complete suit of the mournful

uniform of civilization – top-hat included. His next step was to invite him to lunch. After lunch he presented him to the King and from that time until he left Copenhagen Dr. Cook had no friend, philosopher and guide so staunch and true.'

Meanwhile, Captain Peary, who had made good, beyond any questioning, his title to having reached the North Pole just twelve months after Dr. Cook's alleged discovery of it, was branding his rival explorer publicly as a humbug and a liar. Scene V shows us Stead puzzled and more than a little anxious. 'What kind of man is this Dr. Cook?' he imagines his readers asking him. Here is his reply – headlines and all:

'NAÏVE

'To which I answer – and I think almost all of us who went to Copenhagen would agree with me in replying – that he does not strike us as a man, but rather as a child – a naïve, inexperienced child, who sorely needed some one to look after him, and tell him what he ought to do in his own interest. It was really most pathetic to see his efforts to readjust himself to the busy, bustling, new environment of modern civilization.

'NUMB

'When we were struggling through the crowd at the landing I asked him to let me arrange for him a general interview, at which all the press-men could be present. "Yes," he said, "but put it off till to-morrow." As if the ravenous maw of the world's press, with its teeming special editions, could wait complacently for twenty-four hours before hearing what he had to say. "Why this hurry?" he was always asking, with the absent air of a man who has lived six months at a time in the timeless solitude of the Arctic night. As for his inability to protect his own interests, even in matters of pounds, shillings and pence, it was almost pitiful.

'NEITHER SMART –

'When he made a present to the *New York Herald* of the exclusive story of his discovery he was asked to name his own terms. What did he know of its value? One New York journal sent its representative to meet him before it was known the *Herald* had his letter, with instructions to offer Dr. Cook £3,000, with a possible extra thousand

thrown in, for the first exclusive interview. When Nansen started for the North Pole he was promised £5,000 by the London *Daily Chronicle* if he reached the Pole, and so many pounds less for every degree he fell short of it. As he only got past the eighty-sixth degree he only received £4,000. Cook for the exclusive story of how he actually reached the Pole only asked £600! It is enough to make one weep! But, as he used to say plaintively, "I am not out for money!" He certainly is about the last man whom any business firm would send out for money. Any American newsboy could give him points in the art of looking after himself.

'NOR "SLIM"

'And as he allowed himself to be exploited in money matters, so he displayed an almost infantile inability to see the obvious precautions which he ought to take for his own defence. I think it was this *naïveté*, this often most exasperating inability on his part to forestall hostile criticism, to pacify ignorant but clamorous interviewers avid for "proofs," the nature of which they do not understand, that did as much as anything else to convince everybody of his honesty. He either neglected it or threw away the most obvious chances. He had at his absolute disposition the most expert pens in Europe, and he rather snubbed than welcomed offers to help him. Everything that a clever rogue would do instinctively if he wished to hoax the public Dr. Cook did not do. When he was asked questions, he answered them simply, without flinching or dodging, or beating about the bush. Where he made a mistake he confessed it. But as for making out a good case for himself, or of adopting any *ad captandum* method of appeal, he could no more do it than a child.'

And yet this was the man who, if they were to listen to Captain Peary, had been outdoing Ananias! Was this conceivable? Surely not! So felt Stead and almost everyone at Copenhagen.

Almost everyone but not everyone! Not – and now we reach our climax – not a certain formidable young investigator named Philip Gibbs!

Philip Gibbs (the very famous Sir Philip of to-day), who was representing the *Daily Chronicle*, had been the first of all the newspaper correspondents to tackle Dr. Cook face to face and alone. He had gone out on a tender to the *Hans Egede* and had, in his suave and

gentle but very direct fashion, asked some penetrating questions to which the Doctor had made surprisingly vague and contradictory replies: the most damning fact of all was that this *soi-disant* discoverer had no diary or scientific log-book with him to show in support of his claims. Having formed a most unfavourable first impression, Philip Gibbs was proof thereafter against the '*naïveté*' and the '*numbness*' and all the other negative qualities which, as it seemed to him, were blinding the eyes of his credulous colleagues; so he 'went for' Dr. Cook with an absolute and unwavering assurance which startled all onlookers. 'My dear boy,' Stead exclaimed to him, 'you are ruining yourself and your paper too.' Many of us in London felt the same. Our friend Philip, it seemed to us, was trusting to his instinct rather than forming a judgment on evidence, and we awaited almost tremblingly his collapse.

It was Dr. Cook, however, who collapsed. The case against him turned out to be all too strong, and the unhappy Doctor went back to his home in the United States completely discredited – by general agreement 'a proved impostor.'

An impostor, certainly, to all appearances, but how was his imposture to be explained? It was a psychological conundrum. Stead persisted in his belief in the man's simplicity and sincerity. 'Whether Dr. Cook ever reached the North Pole or not,' he declared, 'of one thing I am certain – he is honestly convinced that he did. He may be suffering from a hallucination; he may have dreamed the whole thing. But he was, and is, incapable of conceiving so colossal a fraud as that of deceiving the whole human race by a made-up tale.' That was Dr. Egan's view also; indeed, it was very widely held. Philip Gibbs, himself, inclined to it later. Here, in full, is a letter which he wrote to Stead some months afterwards – it will serve as an epilogue to our play:

'36 HOLLAND STREET, W.

'DEAR MR. STEAD,

'Many thanks indeed for your very kind letter. Of course it was a good thing for me personally that my attack on poor Cook was justified, and I took a big risk in Copenhagen. But all the same I feel really compassionate towards the poor devil now that he is done to the world. The human brain is such a queer thing that we can never tell when a man is a deliberate fraud or has got a kink somewhere. I think it is quite likely that Cook was acting under a delusion. Where

is he, I wonder? It would be quite a good News-story to go off in search of him!

'With all good wishes for a happy New Year to you and your family.

'Believe me, dear Mr. Stead,

'Yours very sincerely,

'PHILIP GIBBS.'

## VIII

### THE YEAR 1910

Throughout this book, but especially in the second half of it, I have had to bear constantly in mind the familiar adages about 'a part being greater than the whole' and about 'not being able to see the wood for the trees.' A glance over any single volume of the *Review of Reviews* suffices to impress upon one the utter impossibility of keeping step with Stead. To recur to Auberon Herbert's happy metaphor, Stead, even at sixty, had not learnt to run 'cunning' – he would still be round every corner after every conceivable hare. The Index to the volume of the *Review* for January–June 1910, contains at least a score of entries, every one of which stands for some characteristic aspect of its editor's life. Let us glance at a few of them.

Under 'Belgium' comes the death of Leopold II. on December 16, 1909. We have seen Stead's dealings with King Leopold in 1899 and 1903, but in the Chapter on Gordon there was no occasion to speak of Stead's one and only personal encounter with that remarkable personage in 1884. Stead recalls the story now: his impetuous dash to Brussels; his startling proposal (which had been considered and approved by people in high places in London) that Leopold should take the Soudan as a gift from the British Government and, in return, make himself responsible for Gordon's safety; the vehement discussion that followed – the tall, angry monarch 'with the long nose and the sinister eye' towering over his pertinacious visitor 'as a Cochin China rooster might tower over a little Bantam cock'; the emphatic and angry refusal; and finally, some months later, the King's exclamation to M. Emile de Laveleye, 'Oh, Stead? It was terrible! How that man made me sweat!'

The deaths of Mr. Frederick Greenwood, the *Pall Mall Gazette's* first editor, and of Sir George Lewis, served also to revive old memories upon which one might dwell; the publication of a fragment

of George Meredith's posthumous romance, *Celt and Saxon*, reminds us that the great novelist began with immense gusto a fantastic work with Stead in the rôle of hero as a sort of moral Hercules – he once told Stead the gist of it with roars of laughter; the General Election of 1909 – Stead, the Pamphleteer, with his 'Why the Lords must go' and a dozen other 'Papers for the Crisis' had been at his most active throughout the struggle; Mr. Lloyd George's 'Old Age Pensions' scheme – W. T. Stead, and still more his brother, Herbert, had done something to prepare the ground – for that. And so on, and so on – 'The Naval Programme,' 'The Peace Movement,' 'Psychical Research,' 'Votes for Women.' Each of these subjects seems to call for a new chapter at the present stage of Stead's life. In addition, we have his second visit to Ireland; his intensified preoccupation with the Near East; his new enthusiasm for Pageants;[1] and finally – but this belongs rather to the close of the year – his championship of that surgeon of genius, Mr. H. A. Barker.[2] Stead's advocacy of Mr. Barker's claims to professional recognition was one of his finest achievements as a journalistic knight-errant. Even now this unanswerable vindication, 'The Hinterland of Surgery,' may be re-read with a thrill of pleasure. 'You have pleaded my cause,' Mr. Barker wrote to him afterwards, 'as no one else in England could have done: I am deeply grateful.' The battle was yet to win, as we know, but, as on so many other occasions, the forces of prejudice and pedantry suffered at Stead's hands their first defeat.

Stead's efforts in 1908–10 at mediation in Near Eastern turmoils were characteristically bold and unconventional, but none of them counted for a great deal. He knew more about the Young Turks and their movement than almost any other Englishman, and he had many personal friends in their ranks, but his efforts to help and guide them will find no place in history.

The visit to Ireland in March, 1910, was of no importance, but it was a very pleasant experience. He stayed in Dublin as the guest of Mrs. Tickell, who, previously to her marriage, had been for many years his confidential secretary.

'It was on this visit,' Mrs. Tickell writes me, 'that Mr. Stead met

[1] Stead's helpful zest for pageants brought him into very cordial friendship both with Sir Frank Benson, in whose Shakespearean productions he had come to delight, and with that most brilliant of Pageant-Masters, Sir Frank Lascelles.

[2] Afterwards Sir Herbert Barker.

"Æ."[1] I went with him to "Æ's" office in Plunkett House and they had a great heart-to-heart talk. Mr. Stead afterwards was wildly enthusiastic and declared that if he had seen no one else and done nothing else in Ireland he would have been quite content to have got to know "Æ." One evening we dined at the house of Mr. T. W. Russell, Secretary to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. Mr. T. P. Gill and the late Commissioner Baily were also guests. Mr. Stead made me promise that I would stop him if the conversation drifted to "spooks," and I made myself very unpopular as everyone wanted to talk about them!'

Mrs. Tickell ends her letter to me thus: 'You are writing the life of one of the most lovable men that ever lived. I know that when the *Titanic* went down I lost my best friend.'

## IX

### ONE MORE PORTRAIT: STEAD IN 1910–1912

None among Stead's associates has had more interesting and amusing and arresting memories of him to record than Mr. E. S. Hole, whose sympathetic comment on his chief's experiences as a Spiritualist I cited as a text to Chapter 16. Mr. Hole worked with Stead in 1910, 1911, and 1912, first as a kind of confidential secretary, afterwards as Advertising Manager of the *Review of Reviews*. It is in connection with the latter appointment that he tells his best story. Stead, I may explain, was still the philanthropic spendthrift in 1911 whom we saw in the *Review of Reviews'* first year, and with Mr. Stout, as Business Manager, still saving him periodically, by the skin of his teeth, from the Bankruptcy Court.

Mr. Hole, in his own way as strenuous a worker as Stead himself, resolved to 'make good' in his new post. He did 'make good,' and within three months he was able to point to a very considerable increase in the revenue from advertisements. What surprised and hurt him was that Mr. Stout, his office superior, although not lacking in zeal for the *Review's* welfare and although manifestly the best of good fellows – entirely free from envy or jealousy – showed little appreciation of his industry, ingenuity, and success. At last, being by nature frank and impetuous, Mr. Hole gave expression to his feelings.

[1] Mr. George Russell, Agriculturist, Journalist, Statesman, Mystic, Poet, Painter and Conversationalist!

'Look here, Mr. Stout,' he said, 'here have I been slaving away for the *Review* and increased its "ads." to the extent of £1,000 a quarter, and you don't seem a bit pleased. I don't understand it, I tell you.'

'Oh, what's the good of getting in another £1,000 a quarter?' exclaimed Mr. Stout wearily, preoccupied perhaps at the moment over some new financial complication that had been sprung on him. 'What's the good of getting in another £1,000? It only means that the dear old chief will spend another £1,100!'

Apart from that weighty consideration, it was probably impossible for Mr. Stout, with his twenty years' experience of Stead's editorial methods, to wax enthusiastic or sanguine over the Advertising Department. He could recall how one class of advertisers after another had been alienated by dangerous enthusiasms and unpopular campaigns, beginning with the Mattei cure for Cancer and coming to a climax with 'Our Brother Boers.' The average newspaper man is a cynic, and in Fleet Street even now you will hear such remarks as 'Old Stead was wonderful with his "stunts" – he always knew what would fetch the public,' or 'He was a shrewd old fellow – he must have done pretty well out of that last "scoop" of his.' Mr. Stout and Mr. Hole know better. 'Stead,' declares Mr. Hole, 'could have amassed riches beyond the wildest dreams of those idle scribblers whose minds associated the use of his pen with the same hack principles as their own. Many of the articles from which he is supposed to have derived financial benefit cost him thousands of pounds – and he deliberately weighed the consequences before writing them.'

The following appreciation of Stead from Mr. Hole's pen is so excellent that I reproduce it in full – it was printed by Mr. Henry Stead in the Australian *Review of Reviews* for April 1913:

'W. T. STEAD

'BY A CO-WORKER WHO KNEW HIM INTIMATELY

'William Thomas Stead believed in God. Therein lay the cause of his strange lack of harmony with the generality of mankind, and his equally strange charm for all who knew him as a man and not as a set of disconcerting ideas behind cold printers' ink. He had no conscious bias and judged each individual question on its own individual merits. Hence, strictly speaking, he belonged to no party, but contained within himself a tinge of every school and owed adherence to none.

By virtue of this very freedom of his intellect he was naturally nearer to the Liberals, properly so-called, than to the Conservatives, although his veneration for the truly and intrinsically venerable gave him a sound conservatism in many important respects, while his insistence upon the predominance of right over expediency rendered him a thorn in the side of any opportunist or recalcitrant Liberal legislators. Consequently, he was ever at variance with one party without attempting to conciliate the other. With him it was not the avoidance of Scylla and Charybdis, but the deliberate and direct collision with both. His reference of every question to its elementary first principles, quite apart from the exigencies of creed or party, gave his attitude that element of the unexpected which almost invariably proved to be founded on pure logic. He owed a responsibility to none but God. To the superficial observer he was a mass of contradictions. He was an Imperialist who hated militarism. He fought for universal peace and two keels to one. He was "a democrat who flouted the democracy." He was a lover of pomp and ceremony who always dressed shabbily.

'The very width of W. T. Stead's tolerance caused his troubles with the creeds. He abandoned his "Civic Church" idea because the Nonconformists objected to the inclusion of the Roman Catholics. He expurgated the *Kreutzer Sonata*, and defended La Milo. He quarrelled with the Roman Catholics in his defence of the Mormons. He attacked the Mormons for holding idiotic tenets and defended them from their adversaries. He was more jealous of his pen than of his life, and yet "wrote up" undertakings with a commercial basis. And in every single instance there was a sweet reasonableness which reconciled each with the other if men were not in too great a hurry to consider. Only his profound but childlike faith in the approbation and guidance of his "Senior Partner," and his rectilinear following of his reading of his "sign-posts," can explain the phenomenal and seemingly superhuman strength behind his isolated personality. To say that his life-work was the product of an exaggerated self-importance and an inflated ego is to betray a complete ignorance of the true nature of the pure and unselfish being, who, when not absorbed by some abstract conversational problem or concrete social evil was one of the most unassuming of all men. Instead of having any self-importance he was oblivious of himself, and no one ever paid any attention to the quietly and shabbily dressed, drooping man who

sat in tramcar, 'bus or tube, hustled and jostled by his hurrying fellow mortals. To him a taxi was an extravagance, and nothing less than an international pilgrimage would justify a new suit.

'Scarcely anything less than a wedding would bring a tall hat to his noble head, and his bag was a source of wonder by the very fact of its holding together after so many years of constant use. Methinks I see him now before me, proceeding in his firm, methodical pace, as he did every morning, through the by-streets of Westminster, through Old Palace Yard, past the Abbey, past the Commons, on to the Embankment, thence to proceed unnoticed, unknown, and unobserved, in a penny car to Aldwych, almost to the office door. How vividly I can see his steady forward tread, his head bent slightly, its massive broadness striking all who took a second look, his bag swinging gently by his side, his form and motions full of a quiet, natural dignity, and his every movement indicating forward force and wonderful energy. His life was even as his walk – direct to the goal, and he moved through his years like "a grand machine." Pride was absent from his every act, but behind his unpretentious externals was that consciousness of intellect which rendered an unsurpassed and unquestioned leader of men. Acts which have been imputed to his pride are directly traceable to the childlike simplicity of his whole nature. The leviathan among political, economical, theological, or social questions was as a gudgeon among the goldfish in the fine-drawn niceties of social intercourse. Yet, as a host, he was unsurpassed, and the manner in which he somehow seemed to give his special individual attention to a salon crowded with guests was a point which always baffled me to understand. Like the god in the old Persian legends, he seemed to be in several places at once, with a contagious affability which endeared him to all.

'I once said to him, "Either society keeps straight on, and you zigzag, or you keep straight on and society zigzags." I have no hesitation in accusing society of the unrectilinear course. His was the seeing intellect of a child wielding the force of a Vulcan. He shocked and startled society as it shocked and startled him, as it shocks and startles us poor pigmies who are content to sit tight and acquiesce solely because we value comfort, conventionality and convenience. Not all great, but all *successful*, teachers have used the same direct methods. Shaw shocks none the less fundamentally, but in a different way, and with different objects. But the questions attacked by Mr.

Stead were seldom, if ever, abstract and academic; they were practical, present, urgent and vital, and, the glory be given unto him, he seldom failed in his object. *He* was ever the one to suffer. Not only did he blow down the iniquity, but he had also to pay the cost of the gunpowder and bear the scars of his own victory. To talk to him of "consequences" was to attack his belief in God. His faith was such that it entered into every phase and crevice of his activities, and permeated every fibre of his being. "If you publish that you will sacrifice fifty thousand readers of the *Review*!" "So much the worse for the fifty thousand readers," would be his steady, calm and unaffected response. "Do the public edit me, or do I edit for the public?" represented his attitude.

'One thing only could perturb him, and perturb him to an incredible depth. It was the absence of any "sign-post" in a time of stress or even in a small emergency. Then he waited, and the change was marked. He was even as the unhorsed, swordless knight, but so soon as the course was clear and the sign deciphered, though the path might lead through gaol or mob or palace or wild, tempestuous ocean, he went his way as placid and unruffled as the veriest maid to her village school. I have seen him seeking his lacking sign-post like an Alpine guide 'midst the treacherous snows. I have seen him burst into my office upon me, his visage bright with that intense happiness which it alone could portray, his whole being vibrating with the expression of pent-up, vigorous energy, his strangely, sadly-laughing soft blue eyes large with untold joy, and on his lips the news of "what had happened," and of the sign he had therefrom interpreted. Every step I made in his employ succeeded its definite and appropriate sign-post, and my very entry there was delayed for more than a year pending the same indispensable preliminary. Let no man laugh, for we who were around him have been far too often staggered by the unexpected vindication of his deductions to find "coincidence" a fitting word, and his greatest achievements were accomplished with no further capital than his own implicit belief in their needfulness. I refer to his successful, or rather to his most obviously successful, undertakings, for I believe that his greatest achievements have yet to be enumerated, he having paid the cost, the true benefits being yet to come.

'I have referred to the confident manner in which he looked for guidance. His last was one of his most explicit sign-posts. He had

finally settled all outstanding matters connected with the development of his *Review* which, to his delight, was making steady forward progress, and was awaiting his next call to arms. At that time he became spontaneously and keenly interested in a comprehensive, original and highly successful movement in America for national evangelization on the card-index system. Such a movement, free from shibboleths and cant, secured his full and entire sympathy. He spoke to others and myself about it several times, and when he received a direct invitation to address it in conference, it was to him the most obvious call to action for some great purpose. On the evening before he set sail we rode together to his home. On the way he was more deeply earnest than was his wont. "Well," he said, "and what shall I do out there?" "You will make a big splash!" I replied with a smile, but sadly. "Yes," he said, "I shall do that." He paused. "But there is something behind it all which I don't clearly understand just yet. Believe me, Hole, the Senior Partner does not fling me across three thousand miles of land and sea with no great purpose." He remained somewhat pensive. He then described to me a strange instance of guidance vouchsafed to a devout man, and we were both deeply moved. We gripped hands at parting. "Good-bye, my lad," he said. "Do your best. Write me, Hotel Manhattan, New York. God bless you!" "God bless YOU, Mr. Stead," I answered, with a full throat, and went into the darkness with the big tears starting, leaving him to follow that clear sign-post which was to lead him direct to Heaven.'

## CHAPTER 29

## THE END

We have now reached the close of Stead's career. He himself, in the autobiographical sketch from which so many citations have been made, thus summarizes the last great effort of his life to which he attached importance.

'My next sphere of international activity was in Turkey in the year 1911. I twice visited Constantinople, the first time before the war,[1] and I seized the opportunity of pressing as vigorously as I could upon the attention of the Sultan and the Grand Vizier the absolute necessity for following the policy of peace and reform, and avoiding any collision with the Balkan States. My second visit was after the Italian War had broken out, when I went to see what could be done towards demanding that the Powers should refuse to recognize any change in the *status quo* before an International Tribunal. My visit was an active propaganda for arbitration in Constantinople, which met with great support; and when I left, everything was arranged for the departure of a band of Ottoman pilgrims representing all the races and religions of the Empire, which would go round Europe protesting against violated Treaties, demanding the establishment of an International Tribunal before which it would be possible to arraign such an international malefactor as the Italian Government. On my return home, I summoned a meeting at Whitefield's Tabernacle for the purpose of rendering an account of my stewardship, and setting forth the result of my pilgrimage. The meeting was a great success. Afterwards I took the chair at another meeting, when Mr. McCullagh[2] lectured upon the Italian atrocities at Tripoli. But other issues, notably that of the Anglo-German dispute over Morocco and the question of the Anglo-Russian policy in Persia, submerged the Tripoli question. The Turks themselves broke up into parties, the Pilgrimage never started from Constantinople, and the war is going on to this day.'

It is unnecessary to dwell here upon these events. Readers who are

[1] The war between the Turks and Italians in Tripoli. Stead wrote this autobiographical sketch early in 1912.

[2] Mr. Francis McCullagh, the well-known war-correspondent.

interested in the subject will find Stead's Constantinople experiences set forth very entertainingly in the *Review of Reviews* for 1911.[1]

It was one of the forlornest of Stead's forlorn hopes. '*Mon cher et éminent ami*,' wrote to him in November 1911, M. Jean Finot, editor of *La Révue*. 'I am following your Press campaign with the keenest interest. Once again I behold my valiant, eloquent, admirably humane Stead!' But, M. Finot went on to warn him France had given Italy a free hand in regard to Tripoli. 'Therefore,' he went on, 'you must not cherish the notion that we shall raise any obstacles in the way of annexation.' As for the other European Powers – with the exception of Austria, who had intimated that the frontiers of European Turkey must be respected – so far from threatening Italy, they had been addressing to her '*opinions amicales*.'

I shall not attempt to enumerate Stead's other activities and preoccupations during these last two years. The award of The Hague Court Arbitration (September 1910), in the Newfoundland Fisheries Dispute was a source of great delight to him; so had been President Taft's famous utterance a few months earlier, to the effect that even 'matters of national honour' ought not to be excluded from Arbitration Courts. Called as a witness before the Divorce Commission which was held in December 1910, Stead had the satisfaction of expounding freely and somewhat startlingly his opinions upon our marriage laws. He found new objects for enthusiasm in Earl Grey's Co-Partnership schemes, in the Pageants of Sir Frank Lascelles, and in the Anglo-American convivialities initiated by Sir Harry Brittain. He continued the *Review of Reviews* 'Character Sketches' with undiminished *verve*, revealing to a keenly-interested public the previously unknown features of many men now familiar to us all. In short, it was still the same Stead, more alert and vivacious and alive than anyone else living.

A cablegram from New York, dispatched March 17, 1912, by Mr. Fred B. Smith, the organizer of a kind of 'Revivalist' campaign known as 'The National Men and Religion Forward Movement,' prefaced the end. It was worded thus: 'Will you come New York and address the Great Men and Religious Congress in Carnegie Hall April

[1] In Miss Stead's volume, *My Father*, will be found one of Stead's many accounts of his famous interview with the Sultan. See also Stead's pamphlet, *Tripoli and the Treaties*.

twenty-second (*sic*) together with President Taft? We pay expenses. Subject World Peace. Please cable.'

Here is Stead's comment upon this enterprise, as printed in the *Review of Reviews* for April 1912 – one of the last things he wrote :

'THE MEN AND RELIGION FORWARD MOVEMENT

'A very remarkable religious movement has been in progress during the winter in America, which has attracted much too little attention in this country. For some time past it has been noted in the United States that the Churches are falling more and more into the hands of women. They say that on an average there are three women Church members to one male. To arrest this tendency and to restore the requisite masculine element to popular religion in the States, a syndicate was formed for the purpose of uniting evangelical Churches in America, and of combining efforts to bring men and boys into the Church. Women apparently are left out of the movement altogether. It began last Summer with a representative conference at Silver Bay, in the State of New York, which was attended by delegates from all parts of the Union. It was decided to hold a series of eight-day missions, having as their objective the reviving of the interest of men and boys in the work of the Church. The dominant idea of the promoters was to bring business methods into religion, and to work for the attainment of moral ends with the same energy, concentration and common-sense that are used in the making of a great fortune. Selected teams of speakers were sent to the various cities with the object of getting the Churches into line in the first case, and in the second case for the getting of the men and boys into the Churches. The objects of the Men and Religion Forward Movement are divided under seven different heads : – (1) Membership; (2) boys' work; (3) Bible-study; (4) evangelism; (5) social service; (6) home and foreign missions; (7) inter-Church work.

With the view of enthroning God in the conscience of man, they undertook a religious and sociological survey of the territory, and suggested no fewer than sixty charts which were to be made as the result of this exhaustive series of censuses. The department for social service naturally appeals most to the world at large. The Social Institute programme is very comprehensive. It appeals to all our readers because it is an attempt to realize on a national scale the ideals of our old Civic Church, *plus* a distinctly evangelistic element

which the Civic Church movement lacked. I am interested and surprised to find an almost entire absence of any allusion, direct or indirect, to the fact of existence after death. The committee has been kind enough to ask me to address a meeting, held under their auspices, on the "World's Peace," in Carnegie Hall, New York, on April 21st (*sic*), at which President Taft and others will be among the speakers. I expect to leave by the *Titanic* on April 10th, and hope I shall be back in London in May.'

Among the other speakers were to be Mr. James Bryce, the British Ambassador (afterward Lord Bryce), Mr. William Jennings Bryan, and Mr. Booker Washington.

Miss Stead has told us how her father spent his last Sunday at home at Hayling Island, how he gloried 'in the beautiful weather, the blue sea and the sunshine,' and how on the day of his departure, Wednesday, April 10, he was full of enthusiasm and delight at the size and magnificence of the *Titanic*.' He stood on deck, watching and waving to his wife, as the great ship steamed away on her maiden voyage.[1]

To the accounts already published of the disaster, and of the fashion in which Stead met his death, there is not much to add. Mr. W. H. Fairbairns,[2] however, one of Stead's closest friends, has recorded for me memories which follow – they will be read with deep interest:

'One or two days before Stead left on his last journey his daughter was playing Shakespeare in Enfield, and my wife and my family had the pleasure of entertaining them, with Mrs. Stead, in our home there. On the second evening Stead alone came to sleep, and after the performance we sat and talked far into the night. He was full of his journey to America and begged me to go with him. But beyond this he talked about general affairs in that fascinating manner that all who had the privilege to know him loved. I think our house must have been the last that he visited before he went away, and I recall with reverence and gratitude that last talk. Then, when I was in New York in the spring of 1913, I had the good fortune to meet with Mr. Frederick Seward, a New York lawyer who not only was on the *Titanic*, but sat next to Stead in the dining saloon. He had never met him before, but in a few hours a friendship was formed, and Seward

[1] See *My Father*, and also Miss Harper's *Stead, the Man*.
[2] Of the Campfield Press, St. Albans.

told me how all at the table were almost spell-bound by the humour, and beauty, and breadth of vision of Stead's conversation. There were careless men around who were brought in the short space of time that they were together to read serious things that Stead put into their hands. After the *Titanic* was struck Mr. Seward and Stead were together on deck and talked for a little. Then the latter said "I think it is nothing serious so I shall turn in again." As far as I know that was the very last that was heard of Stead.'

Not 'the very last,' for Miss Stead in her Memoir was able to give this further brief statement by Mr. Seward, and, in addition, the evidence of one other fellow-passenger, Mrs. William Shelley:

'He was one of the very few,' wrote Mr. Seward, 'who were actually on deck when the iceberg was struck. I saw him soon after and was thoroughly scared, but he preserved the most beautiful composure. Whether he stayed on board or sought safety by leaping into the sea I cannot tell, but I do know he faced death with philosophic calm.'

Mrs. Shelley, who with her mother, left the *Titanic* in the last lifeboat,[1] wrote afterwards to Miss Edith Harper:

'I was only on deck a short time until mother and I took to the lifeboat.

'Your beloved Chief, together with Mr. and Mrs. Strauss, attracted attention even in that awful hour, on account of their superhuman composure and divine work.

'When we, the last lifeboat, left, and they could do no more, he stood alone at the edge of the deck in silence and what seemed to me a prayerful attitude of profound meditation.

'You ask if he wore a life-belt. Alas! no, they were too scarce.

'My last glimpse of the *Titanic* showed him standing in the same attitude and place.'

I have cited already some of the striking tributes to Stead which

[1] In 1886 Stead had published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* a vivid imaginary description of the sinking of a modern liner with all its attendant horrors, and had appended to it an editorial footnote as follows: 'This is exactly what might take place and what will take place if the liners are set free short of boats.' This article was reprinted in the *Review of Reviews* for June, 1912, with the comment: 'After twenty-six years of "progress" the Board of Trade is responsible for the loss of 1,600 lives on the *Titanic*, because there were not enough boats!'

appeared in the Press after the news of the *Titanic* disaster was confirmed.[1] A few lines from an article written by Mr. J. L. Garvin, and printed in the *Review of Reviews* for May 1912, will suffice here to recall the general feeling evoked by Stead's death:

'Walking in Oxford Street at midday when the loss of the *Titanic* was certain, the only name I heard mentioned by the groups on the pavement was his, and that was in itself significant of the extent to which he had made his name a national and international word.'

After some references to Stead's work for friendship with Russia, and for closer bonds between the English-speaking races, as well as to his deep and far-spreading influence upon the journalism of the Empire, Mr. Garvin concludes:

'His grave is where he might have chosen it, midway between England and America, under the full stream of their intercourse; and I cannot but think that his death was in accordance with his view of things. It attested the great realities that underlie the common movements of our life.'

[1] See Vol. I, pp. 115–116 and 308. See also Appendices V and VII.

## CHAPTER 30

## STEAD'S PLACE IN HISTORY

WHAT will Stead's name stand for in times to come? Will he be spoken of principally in connection with his championship of women? Or as the ardent advocate of a big Navy? Or as the inspirer of the ideals of Cecil Rhodes? Will he baffle students of politics as the perfervid Imperialist who yet, from 1899 onwards, was the most out-and-out partisan of the Boers? His own prophecy – that he would be remembered a hundred years hence, if at all, as 'Julia's amanuensis' – most of us will dismiss as extravagant. His belief in spiritualism constituted, of course, a very remarkable feature of his mental and moral evolution; and in this field of thought and action, as in so many others, he was a bold pioneer: but this one aspect of his character cannot conceivably overshadow all the rest. He himself, in other moods, pointed to his services in the cause of Peace and of Arbitration as among the outstanding things in his life; were he with us to-day, I imagine that 'Arbitrate before you Fight!' would, of all his favourite shibboleths, be the one most often on his lips.

My own impression is that Stead will be remembered rather for what he was than for any of the things he did: that he will figure in history as the bravest and most brilliant of all English journalists, and as perhaps the most extraordinary man ever seen in Fleet Street.[1]

Heroic in his courage, kind and generous beyond belief, in his own unique way a man of genius, W. T. Stead, while comparatively free from the besetting sins of Englishmen, was full of all sorts of quaint weaknesses and eccentricities and absurdities. These defects but endeared him the more to his intimate friends – merely making them laugh sympathetically and affectionately – but they were apt so to repel and infuriate many people as to blind them to his great qualities. On the other hand, he always had about him a group of idolatrous worshippers who would admit no defect in him whatever; and even among his quite level-headed associates – as among those admirers who knew him only from afar through his work – there are still, I imagine, a number who regard him with veneration unalloyed. 'Give your own picture of Stead,' wrote to me a business

[1] A very interesting comparison might, of course, be drawn between Stead and Cobbett, both as individuals and as publicists.

man of note who was closely allied with him for over ten years; but he added: 'It will hurt me, I confess, if you say anything against him. I really think he was faultless.'

My picture of Stead is not of a faultless man, but it will be found, I hope, to be the picture of a man amazingly, almost incredibly, good and lovable.

'"I love the old boy!" is a phrase I have heard more often in Fleet Street regarding dear old Stead than of any other mortal,' wrote Mr. E. S. Hole to me about his former chief, when sending me those striking memories which we have read. It is on this note that I would end my book.

# APPENDICES

I 'THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE *PALL MALL GAZETTE*'

II STEAD'S FIRST 'DAILY PAPER.' HIS ACCOUNT OF IT TO A CHICAGO JOURNALIST

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# APPENDIX I

## 'THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE *PALL MALL GAZETTE*

THE idea of formulating the *P.M.G.* Gospel came to Stead after he had been told by a Colonial Office official that in every British colony there was 'a *P.M.G.* Party and an anti-*P.M.G.* Party.' The entire document as originally printed would fill more than thirty of our pages. Here it will suffice to extract from it the ten outstanding items:

1. *The Development of the Individual.*

All is of the devil that weakens the independent self-reliant individuality of man. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And no amount of stall-fed content can compensate for the destruction or the atrophy of the sense of independent identity and personal responsibility by which every man feels himself a distinct unit, responsible directly to his Maker, and not a mere insignificant cog in the great social treadmill. That self-reliant, independent soul is the mainspring of progress. It differentiates men from sheep.

2. *The Independence of Woman.*

Woman, no longer the mere ancillary of man, to be petted or enslaved at his will, is to have as independent a voice in the disposal of her life as he. No longer are careers to be closed to the talents of one-half of the race. The course must be open to all, and woman herself must decide, after full experiment, what best suits her genius, and how best she can develop her faculties.

3. *Christian is that Christian does.*

A new catholicity has dawned upon the world. All religions are now recognized as essentially Divine. They represent the different angles at which Man looks at God. Questions of origin, polemics as to evidences, erudite dissertations concerning formulæ, are disappearing, because religions are no longer judged by their supposed accordance with Divine Revelation, but by their ability to minister to the wants and fulfil the aspirations of man. The individual, what can it make of him? As it raises or debases, purifies or corrupts, fills with happiness or torments with fear, so it is judged to accord with the Divine will. . . . Handsome is that handsome does. Christian is that Christian does. The man who acts as Christ would do under the same circumstances is the true believer, though all his dogmas be heretical and his mind is in a state of blind agnosticism. The true religion is that which makes most men most like Christ. . . . And what is the ideal which Christ translated into a realized life? For practical purposes this: To take trouble to do good to others. A simple formula,

but the rudimentary and essential truth of the whole Christian religion. To take trouble is to sacrifice time. All time is a portion of life. To lay down one's life for the brethren – which is sometimes literally the duty of the citizen who is called to die for his fellows – is the constant and daily duty demanded by all the thousand-and-one practical sacrifices which duty and affection call upon us to make for men. Hence the supreme Antichrist is selfishness, and he is furthest from his Divine Exemplar who converts even the ministrations of religion into the consecration of selfishness, which overleaps even the limits of time and obtrudes its hateful egotism into eternity.

4. *Federation of the Empire.*

Empire such as ours there is not in all the world, nor ever has been. The peopling of the waste places with men of our blood, of our race, of our religion, and of our laws, goes on without ceasing. Unless it is checked, the end of another century will see the world divided into two halves – one half speaking English as a native tongue, the other half learning it as the *Lingua Franca* of the human race. Of all problems, therefore, the most important is to keep these great and growing English-speaking States in friendly alliance, if not in political union. The Federation of the British Empire is the condition of its survival. As an Empire we must federate or perish. If our foreign policy is to be one, one Government must represent all. If all are to be equally exposed to danger of attack, all must share equally in providing for defence. No one proposes to attempt to weld together the ocean-sundered free Republics under the British flag by the loose bonds of a centralized Administration. There should be the minimum control from the centre compatible with the maximum of efficient co-operation in such affairs as are common to all parts of the Empire, and even this minimum can only be safely exercised when the controlled are fully represented at the centre of control. Nothing should be forced, but everything fostered that makes for the enfranchisement of the Englishman beyond the sea at present without a voice in the government of the Empire, the future of which they will some day control. . . . There are two obstacles in the way of this development. One is mechanical, the other theoretical. The mechanical obstacle is the reluctance of the House of Commons to surrender its present absolute sovereignty over the policy of the Empire. The House of Lords may be left out of account. Against the forces of the greater and democratic Britain, the House of Lords, paralysed by atrophy and undermined by the economic revolution, can make no stand. There is no place for a chamber of titled landlords or lawn-sleeved prelates in the new Constitution. But the House of Commons is altogether another matter. It has usurped all power and, like all usurpers, it will cling tenaciously to all that it has grasped. Nevertheless, the very

magnitude and multiplicity of its prerogatives will prove its own undoing. It is visibly breaking down before our eyes.

The burden is too vast to be borne even by a mob of 670 men, one-half of whom spend their lives in preventing the other half getting anything done. Paralysis, which in the House of Lords has supervened as the result of atrophy and apathy, is no less visible in the House of Commons for overwork and a too great eagerness to do everything. This will lead to centralization – to Home Rule; and with Home Rule will come the necessity for constituting the Imperial Senate, which will be the crown of the Imperial edifice. The other difficulty is theoretical. The problem of drawing the scientific frontier line, which shall demarcate the provinces of the local legislatures, and the Imperial Senate, has hardly been studied, much less solved. Yet its solution lies at the root of all schemes of federation, and it must be attempted even in passing a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The Constitution for the Empire has yet to be written. The task is a gigantic one. But all the signs of the times show that it cannot be much longer postponed.

5. *Arbitration in all Anglo-American Disputes.*

The revolt of the American colonies has created one English-speaking State not under the British flag. This disruption of the Union of the race brought about by the headstrong pigheadedness of the Unionists of the eighteenth century should be healed by the statesmanship of the Home Rulers of the nineteenth. Some day inevitable destiny will compel the two great English States of North America – the Dominion and the Republic – to coalesce. Commercial interests and geographical neighbourhood will prove too strong for all the efforts of politicians to preserve duality where there should be unity. When the Dominion and the Republic coalesce the occasion might afford an opportunity for cementing the alliance between the great branches of the English race. At first the only outward and visible sign of union might be the establishment of a High Court of Arbitration, which would adjudicate upon all questions in dispute between the various States of the English-speaking men. If that were effected, and the internal unity of the race secured by the provision for the automatic adjudication of all disputes, other developments would follow. A penny post for all English-speaking men, a friendly interchange of friendly offices on the part of consuls and captains, and who knows but in the future a common Zollverein, on the basis of free exchange, might enable our posterity to escape all the evils of the division which we owe to the infatuation of our ancestors?

6. *Home Rule for Ireland.*

The Conciliation of Ireland is even more important than the Federation of the Empire. As long as we govern Ireland as we govern no other

part of the Queen's dominions, against the consent of the people who are governed, we shall find the Irish element, instead of cement in the fabric of our race, as it might have been, an element of division, of disunion, and of weakness. You cannot reunite a race when one section of it is bitterly hostile to the other; and that hostility can only be removed by conceding to the Irish what we have conceded to every other section of our Empire – the right to make their own laws according to their own needs. We can hold down Ireland by force if we will, but only at the price of converting the Irish beyond the sea into bitter enemies of the Empire, instead of, as they would otherwise be, the ardent upholders of a dominion which has been founded so largely by their valour. For the sake of the Empire we must consent to concede Home Rule.

7. *Justice and Understanding in all Relations with Subject Races.*

Our position in India and in the further East, in Africa, and in Polynesia, is one which can only be justified by the exercise of our authority in order to minimize the evils of native anarchy, on the one hand, and of the impact of civilization upon savagery on the other. We are responsible for our rowdies, our filibusters, our slave traders, and our rum-sellers. We rear these men. They go forth armed with the resources of our civilization to exploit and plunder the native populations of the uncivilized world. It is our duty to follow the rowdy with the policeman, to dispatch the gunboat after the kidnapper and slave trader, and to enforce the Maine Law where our adventurers have introduced fire-water. The prohibition of the sale of strong drink to the Indians of the Canadian North-west is one instance of the beneficial exercise of Imperial power, just as the introduction of alcohol and opium into Upper Burma is a signal illustration of the worst abuse of our authority. We may not be under any obligation to civilize the savage. We are under the most imperious obligation to prevent those whom we have reared and whom we have bred from using the weapons and poisons of civilization to make him tenfold more the child of hell than he is.

Everywhere authority imposed by force, especially by foreign force, upon unwilling populations, is an evil in itself, only to be tolerated because for the time it staves off still greater evils. The object of all such arbitrary dominion must be to render its existence as speedily as possible unnecessary by educating and elevating the subject races to the full control of their own destinies, the government of their own lands. Hence empires such as we have established in India, the French in Tonkin, and the Russians in Turkestan, exist but in order to dig their own graves, and that best fulfils its purpose which most rapidly renders itself superfluous. The process in any case must be slow. But if the goal were regarded as inevitable the question of the length of each stride in that direction could be discussed as a scientific problem in political dynamics, instead of being argued, as it

now is, with all the heat generated by a dispute not as to the pace but as to the direction of our movement. What is wanted more than anything else in all affairs relating to the governance of men is impartial justice; and justice to be impartial must be informed by an imaginative sympathy, which enables to realize not only what are the views of our subjects, but the full force of the prejudices and passions which are arrayed against our rule. We always understand our own side of the controversy much better than the case of the other side. And yet, without full understanding, how can we hold the balance even? Until we have put ourselves in the place of those we govern, and asked ourselves if we are indeed doing as we would be done by, how can we understand the nature of the prejudice against our rule?

In imposing English or Western habits and customs upon races of different blood, religion, and customs, we run a great danger of transplanting enough to harm, and not enough to benefit. The Spaniard who preached Christianity to the Peruvians at the point of the sword, and slew the heathen for not understanding an imperfectly translated dogma, did no more violence to the religion of Christ than some hasty reformers do to the civilization of the West when they seek to establish the latest results of European social science on a *tabula rasa* of Oriental superstitions.

8. *Common-sense in Regard to Russia.*

Our chief enemies are within. Of foreign foes we need have but little fear provided that we keep the mastery of the seas beyond dispute, and that we do not surrender to the tempter which is for ever urging us to attack the Power with whom it is our duty and our interest to be on terms of hearty friendship. Every nation has its besetting sin. To England the forbidden fruit, to pluck which would be our undoing, is a war with Russia. Russophobia is a malady affecting the brain, predisposing to suicide. Its victims imagine that they are performing the supreme duty of patriotism when they are merely cutting their own throats. It is a craze which has cost us millions upon millions, and seriously weakened our position in the East. But for the strenuous efforts of a section of our countrymen, and the forbearance and good sense of the Russians, we should twice within the last twelve years have convulsed the world with war. . . .

England will do well to stop its ears with wax when next the outcries of these harpy sirens of Russophobia are heard wailing along the wind. Asia is the wedding-ring which unites Russia and England in an indissoluble wedlock. No divorce court can grant a decree for the dissolution of that marriage of the Fates. Neither Empire can destroy the other or expel the other from the continent which they have divided – the north to Russia, the south to England. Russia alone of European Powers has an area and a population that can compare with our own. The two Powers supplement

and complement each other. One represents liberty, the other authority. Both are democratic. If they are at peace, Asia is tranquil. If in opposition, the thunderclouds gather over the Hindoo Koosh, and Central Asia is convulsed because St. Petersburg and London are at variance. There is absolutely no danger of a Russian attack if we mind our own business, keep within our frontiers, and do not rush headlong across Afghanistan to fling ourselves into the arms of the Russian Bear.

9. *Foresight in Regard to France.*

For the time being France is the one Power which can injure us. She is the only Power from whose shores an invading army could be landed on our coast; she is the only Power whose fleet would even attempt to hold the seas against our ironclads; and she is the only Power who has a colonial empire worth naming beside our own. She has coigns of vantage all along our ocean highways from which she could threaten the security of our commerce. At the present moment we have outstanding differences with her in three continents, any one of which could precipitate war. She has relinquished none of her claims in Egypt; her fishers are threatening to defy the laws of the Legislature of Newfoundland; and her troops are occupying the New Hebrides in defiance of solemn pledges repeatedly given by her Ministers. France also is the one European Power who possesses within the British Empire populations of her own race and language, who in case of war might take sides, both in Mauritius and in Lower Canada, against the Empire in which they have been incorporated. And as France is the one rival whose ambitions threaten us with serious danger, she is the one menace to the peace of Europe. All this marks her out as the Power with whom we should endeavour to remain on friendly terms, but also as the one Power upon whose alliance it is impossible to depend, inasmuch as her interests and her aspirations run more directly counter to our own than the interests and aspirations of any other Power in the world.

10. *Establishment of the United States of Europe.*

These considerations indicate the true path of English policy in Europe. Friends of all and allies of none, our interests, which are also the interests of European peace, counsel the cultivation of a close political understanding with the German Empire. We are not of those who declare that England should have no European policy. The old doctrine of non-intervention as opposed to the old policy of intervention was sound. But it is not possible for England to stand absolutely aloof from the discussion of European questions, and it would be wicked even if it were possible. Intervention by the landing of armed forces on the Continent is impossible. Of troops available for such a purpose we have fewer than the Principality of Bulgaria or the Kingdom of Belgium. We have ceased to be a military power in the

European sense of the word. A State which perseveres in the system of voluntary military service cannot enter the lists against nations whose whole manhood is drilled in arms. We are out of the game, and it is a good thing for us that we are. Our strength is needed otherwhere. But that does not justify the cynical repudiation of the responsibilities attaching to our position as the greatest of naval, commercial, and colonizing Powers. On the contrary, it accentuates them, and is in itself a summons to use such influence as we have in the councils of Europe on behalf of that pacific industrial civilization of which we are the solitary surviving exponent.

What, then, is the rôle which we must play in Europe? We answer, to labour in season and out of season in creating a Europe which will be an organic whole, instead of being, as at present, a more or less anarchic amorphous congeries of States. The germ of a federated Continent exists in the concert of Europe. To foster that germ until it attains its full development in the establishment of the Federated United States of Europe is the special rôle of English statesmanship.

# APPENDIX II

## STEAD'S FIRST DAILY PAPER, NOVEMBER 1893

The interview in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* in November 1893 (vide Chapter 18), in which Stead set forth the principal features of the forthcoming *Daily Paper* – that still-born first effort, often confused in people's memories nowadays with the second venture of 1904 – was immensely long, filling eight columns of the journal. Even these condensed extracts will take up much space. In them, however, we have something very like a phonographic record of Stead, the Talker, in his most characteristic form and launched upon a favourite theme – the possibilities of journalism.

The interview, heralded, of course, by the usual half-dozen head lines in types of varied magnitude, begins abruptly:

'If there ever was a demagogue,' said William T. Stead, the London editor, as he slipped further down into his chair and propped his feet up on the railing, 'if there ever was a demagogue in the world, I am one. I'd much rather be a demagogue than a Brahmin. It is only necessary that the demagogue should be moved by right ideas.

'One of the things I looked forward to in coming to Chicago was meeting your late Mayor, Carter Harrison. *He* has been called a demagogue. He had, I am told, a premonition of his violent taking off. I have had a similar warning. I am to die a violent death, but before death comes I am to be twice more locked up in prison.'

The interviewer hereupon suggested that Stead should celebrate the eighth anniversary of his imprisonment (which fell that very day, November 10) by outlining a plan for the reformation of Chicago – an invitation acceded to with much alacrity! We can skip the plan, however, for we shall have it later. Returning to the subject of his imprisonment, Stead got well started on the subject of his latest journalistic ideas:

'Part of my scheme is that before anyone undertakes to write either about the treatment of prisoners or of paupers, or to pronounce critically upon the conduct of men who have revolted against any cruelly hard conditions of life, whether of labour or poverty, such a person should have at least some practical experience of the sufferings of those on whom they pronounce judgment. It would not be difficult. You only require to have a model cell, or facsimile of a prison cell with a hard bed and a small treadmill, and thin soup is cheap and nourishing withal. I know by my own experience the extent to which my very short sojourn in gaol helps me by enabling me to understand how a man feels when the whole organization of society and of justice is turned against him. I have a habit of saying that if I were dictator of the universe I would never allow a man to pronounce

a sentence upon his brother man unless he, the Judge himself, had practical personal experience of the result of the punishment he was inflicting. I do not know how it is in your country, but in ours we have had Judges on the bench who have grown grey in service without ever having even so much as inspected a prison and who, therefore, were imposing sentences without the remotest idea as to the actual way in which their edicts bit into the life and soul of the wretches whom they sentenced.'

'Wouldn't you like to say something more about your new paper? Is it to be on the American plan?'

'That depends on what you consider the American plan. If by "American plan" you mean the habit of keeping your eyes open and making your paper as bright and interesting as possible, I hope it will be on the American plan; but if you mean by the "American plan" a reproduction of many salient features of the American newspaper, then I sincerely hope it will not be on the "American plan" as it at present exists.'

'What ails you in your view of the American newspaper?'

'The first feature in your press which I would not like to attempt to imitate in England is what you may call its superficial "acreage." I suppose it comes from living in a big country that every newspaper editor seems to be continually endeavouring to enlarge his paper until I expect that some fine day I shall find the *Chicago Tribune* coming out on Sunday with a paper which, when spread out flat, will cover the whole area of the United States. I suppose even then you will be continually pining for enlargements.'

'You don't like these big papers, then?'

'I can't say that I do. Already your Sunday paper contains about as much printed matter as your family Bible. You see ours is a small country, Great Britain, and it would not do for us to attempt to introduce colossal blanket sheets. Your paper is too big for us. It is like the bills of fare with which you astound an English visitor on coming down to the breakfast table. I suppose the American can find his way about among the multitudinous items of an American menu, but when a rustic from the Old World like myself is suddenly confronted with a bill of fare containing 113 items for breakfast he is apt to feel very much as he feels when on Sunday morning he opens the Sunday edition of one of your papers. There is a mustering of an immense multitude of miscellaneous happenings and the whole inventive genius of the most inventive people of the world is put on the rack every night in order to construct startling headlines to make the news look important even when it is not. It may be necessary to print in capitals sometimes, especially for half-educated people, but the habit of perpetually printing in gigantic type defeats your object in the long run, for when everything is printed in capitals nothing has any precedence or priority over the competing items of news.'

'Can you name a few of the results of this manner of doing things?'

'Sometimes, as for instance in the case of one well-known New York daily paper, a diligent reader absolutely missed the murder of Carter Harrison, announced as it was with hardly any greater display than the most ordinary item that is vamped into sensational importance.'

The interviewer asked whether there were any other counts in his indictment. Yes, there were. Many. Above all, the way in which American proprietors of newspapers sold their souls to the advertiser, showing 'no other ambition than to heap up an immense fortune and fatten on their gains.' They had not even as much public spirit as the mediæval robber barons.

'What do you mean by that?' asked the *Sunday Tribune* man.

'What I mean is this: In the old days when a man who was stouter or shrewder, or more cunning, than his neighbours raised himself above the level of the common fighting herd and succeeded after a time in carving out for himself a domain in the centre of which he built his castle, from being a mere filibuster, a militant adventurer, fighting for his own profit or for such of his neighbours' goods as he could seize, he developed under the pressure of the spiritual power welded by the old Church into something like a civilized ruler; that is to say, having "made his pile," he used it in order to govern and civilize and educate the people in the midst of whom he had established his castle. But there is no such recognition of responsibility on the part of many newspaper proprietors nowadays. Instead of regarding the wealth which they have acquired by the success of their journals as merely giving them a starting point from which they should be able to civilize and educate and humanize the conditions of life in the midst of the people whose support has given them their wealth, they live self-indulgent, self-centred lives. As individuals they may be excellent persons, but from the point of view of the social organization they are but the fatted swine of civilization.'

'Do you see any way of changing this system?'

'It can be changed only by bringing back into existence the real live Church. The old mediæval baron would probably have been no better than the modern newspaper proprietor if it had not been for the spiritual power which, by a judicious use of hell fire, succeeded in scaring him into something like humanity and decency. We want to substitute something nowadays for the old Church, and I do not at present exactly see where it is to be found, except in the gradual growth of a healthier public and an unsparing and unflinching use of the newspaper as a social pillory in which those who have received much and returned nothing to the community should be stigmatized as they deserve.'

'What do you propose to call your new paper?'

'Simply *The Daily Paper*.'

'What novelties have you in mind?'

'My first novelty is size. So far from being a blanket paper my paper will be a magazine paper, and will be modelled exactly in the shape of its pages upon the *Review of Reviews*: that is to say, it will be a pocket paper which a man can double up with one fold and put into his pocket. It will contain some forty to sixty double-column pages, and it will be conducted upon the principle of containing everything in the day's news that a man wants to remember at the end of the day. As to other innovations my, idea is that the newspaper ought not only to supply news to the general reader, but that it ought to be a universal inquiry office, a general information bureau for all its readers, and if any of my readers wish for information upon any subject, especially upon financial subjects, I hope to be able to supply them, either through the paper or by letter, with the best available advice that can be secured for love or money from the best authorities on the particular subject upon which the information is sought.'

'Are you going to run a confessional in your new scheme?'

'Certainly,' responded Mr. Stead. 'You see my idea of a newspaper is based far more upon the conception of the old Church than upon that of the modern news shop. It is necessary to supply your news and to print matter that the public must read in order to obtain your congregation. Your congregation gives you the ear of the citizens, so that you may be able to inspire them, to educate them, and to generally act as the spiritual power in relation to them. And of course the confessional is indispensable to any institution which attempts to be really helpful to human beings. Of course there is no question of absolution or any ghostly prerogatives of that kind, but the confessional, for purposes of direction, of consolation, and of helpful counsel, ought to be at the very heart and centre of every newspaper which endeavours to do what seems to me the obvious duty of every true journalist.'

'Well, you've got your pillory, your sample gaol, and your confessional, as well as your "Inquire within upon everything" – does that exhaust your novelties?'

'By no means. I have one or two ideas on which I would be very glad to have the opinion of the American journalists. Take, for instance, the advertising. I believe that the advertiser ought to be kept in his place, and nothing whatever should be published that is paid for as an advertisement that is not plainly and conspicuously stamped as such under the head of advertisements. I think, further, that no advertisement should be permitted to creep into the news pages. And, further, I think that an advertiser who will insist upon publishing a vulgar catch-line, his advertisement ought to be rejected; and even if the advertisement is an interesting one itself, it ought not to be reproduced until it gets stale and wearisome. I shall edit

my paper with a strict eye to the reader, and shall rely chiefly if not entirely upon his support.'

'In other words, you would edit your advertising columns?'

'Certainly. I think an editor's duty is to edit his paper from the first page to the last page; and, furthermore, I would undertake, if any advertisement which I published could be proved to have swindled any of my readers, I would undertake, on proof thereof being forthcoming, to prosecute that advertiser for obtaining money on false pretences.'

That was magnificent, the interviewer remarked, but was it business? The 'very best business,' Stead felt sure. The more the advertisers were fenced out of the field, the more anxious they would become to get into it.

From this topic he passed to a notion to which he attached even greater importance:

'There is one feature in the new paper which, I think, can hardly fail to interest journalists here in America. It is a curious phenomenon that whereas in France, in Germany, in Italy, and in Russia, the serial story is a necessity of life, in England no first-class newspaper demeans its columns by the publication of a novel in instalments. This is curious, and indicates that there is something wrong somewhere. The novel constitutes at this moment the only reading of an enormous section of the population. There are millions of human beings, especially among the young and among women, who will never read anything unless it is served up to them in the form of fiction. As a newspaper only deals with fiction of another sort and religiously abstains from publishing fiction that is honestly labelled such, it fails to secure as readers those whose only literary diet is romance. This not only weakens the newspaper by depriving it of a numerous contingent of readers, but it also injures the public because it leaves a large section of the community without any organic relation to contemporaneous history, and hence I regard it as a matter of the first importance to bring in the non-newspaper reading public, or the non-political public, and induce them to take an interest in the events of their own times. And this it seems to me can only be done by an adaptation of some form of serial.'

'Therefore, I suppose, you will put up novels in newspaper form?'

'I have hit upon a scheme which I have discussed with Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. George Meredith and Dr. Conan Doyle and Olive Schreiner and many other leading novelists in our own country, all of whom have expressed the greatest sympathy with the project, although some of them consider that it is an attempt to realize an unattainable ideal.'

'My idea is that the newspaper shall publish a serial, every chapter in which shall have as its *motif* a leading event of the previous day, and that the chapters of that serial shall be written about midnight every night just as our leading articles are written, and that it shall be served up, as it were,

hot and hot the next morning. I should begin with the first number of my newspaper, the first chapter of an English romance – a romance of the world's history – which, once begun, should never end, but go on as long as the newspaper or the world endured. Of course I shall bring episodes in it to a conclusion; as, for instance, I think I would undertake to marry a heroine and kill a leading character every quarter, but with that exception, the *dramatis personæ* and the general plot would be continuous. The idea is that, if not another printed line was read by its readers they would, nevertheless, have a clear insight into the inside track of political events and would be familiar with the leading political characters and would imbibe from merely reading the story a consecutive narrative of the evolution of human affairs.'

'Do you really think that is practicable?'

'I am so convinced that it is that I have already announced it as a leading feature in my new paper. Remember that in writing this serial we have our characters all ready to hand.'

'But do you mean to say that you are going to put living men and women into this story?'

'Certainly. As my story is a story of real life, I am going to have real men and women as the heroes and heroines in the story from beginning to end.'

'But will you be able to deal with the freedom necessary to a novelist, with individuals who are not only characters in your story but who are playing leading parts in the drama of modern life?'

'Oh, it is not difficult. I think that it would be unpardonable to bring in living persons into the story under their own names and impute any sentiment to them which they had not publicly uttered or to describe any acts of theirs which were not public property, but so long as you observe those limitations you can bring your living people in under their own names. Of course I admit fully that in an immense number of cases you cannot bring in your real person under his real name, but that difficulty I get over by taking a hint from the "Society of Psychical Research" and bringing into existence what may be called the "doubles" of all the real characters who figure in contemporaneous politics and society. That is to say, while I would bring Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Henry Irving into the story, each under his own name, when I simply had to impute to them speeches which they had delivered for publication, or describe acts which were matters of public report, I would at the same time have in the story what may be called the "double" of Mr. Gladstone and the "double" of Mr. Irving under different names, who would play parts studied from the life of those persons, but whose actions would be necessarily more or less fictitious. The only rule that I would preserve to prevent clashing is that I would never bring the "double" and his original into the same chapter.'

'Is this an idea of your own; if not, where did you get it?'

'I got it from two very diverse sources; from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and from Zola's Rougon-Macquart series. From Spenser's *Faerie Queene* I borrowed the idea of putting into a romance more or less idealized portraits of living personages, and so constructing my *dramatis personæ*, as it were, out of real flesh and blood. From Zola I have borrowed the conception of a series of stories, all turning upon the fortunes of a family; but whereas Zola has only one family, I should have one or two or three, one of which would represent the progressive element in society, while another would represent the retrograding and barbarous element, while yet a third would represent those who are, so to speak, betwixt and between – neither one nor the other; too good for damning and too bad for blessing. Of course, the story would be more of a panorama than a miniature painting. I should edit my story, but I should have as many men and women employed in writing it as were necessary to secure a full and well-informed treatment of the various episodes which have to be served up in the form of romance. I am convinced that the novelist-journalist, as I may call him, is destined to carry off the bell in the journalism of the future.'

'Wouldn't short stories do as well without the consecutive element?'

'By no means. My idea would be always to make each instalment of the serial as far as possible complete in itself and interesting in itself, so that if anyone took up the paper who had never read the preceding chapters he would find enough in it to interest him and carry him on with it. But the immense advantages of the serial over the short story are two: first, the serial, when it has once caught hold of the reader, carries him on. He wants to see what is going to happen to-morrow. If the events of the previous day do not afford subjects capable of being treated in a story fashion, you could carry on perfectly well for a day or two by printing a purely imaginary story of adventures of purely imaginary heroes and heroines, who by that time will have become as much real persons to your readers as any man in Parliament or the army. By these means, I believe it will be possible to vivify the whole record of contemporary history so as to bring into the intelligent public vast masses of inert and apathetic citizenship which at the present moment is our despair.'

Stead now got started on another hobby:

'There is another feature which, perhaps, will surprise you. I do not intend to employ a single man on my paper in any post, from the highest to the lowest, unless I have previously satisfied myself that I cannot find a woman who will do the job. My reason for doing that is that nearly every newspaper office in the country is run upon an exactly opposite principle, and I think that so far as I can in my little way I shall try to redress this injustice so as to do as much as one man can do to make the balance even.

Of course I am well aware that for many duties in a newspaper press I shall have to employ men. Women are not trained to them, but if I could, I would not only have my paper written by women, but composed by women and printed by women. I would have my women driving the news-carts that distribute the papers to the various news-agencies. Women can do very nearly everything that men can do, and a good many things that men cannot do; there is nothing that I should enjoy starting the paper more for than to give woman a fair chance to see what she can do. At the same time let me say that I absolutely and entirely disapprove of any one-legged show, as I call it, and I detest any institution, whether it be a club, or a Legislature, or a public meeting, or a newspaper office, that is run exclusively by persons of one sex. The human race is composed of both sexes, and every institution which endeavours to represent that race ought to give equal representation to each of the sexes.'

Next came a tirade against the 'Night Editor':

'Anything that happened during the previous day is "news" to the night editor of a morning paper. Anything that happened a little bit further back, although it may be ever so much more interesting and of far greater importance, is not "news" and goes into the waste basket. Now I believe that the general newspaper-reading public does not in the least share that superstition of the night editor. Night editors are, for the most part, specialists who spend their time among people who make and print and sell news. They are not in very close touch with the reading public and they are continually sacrificing much better news to worse news, merely because the latter occurred a few hours later than the former. Now, to my thinking, the supreme duty of an editor is to make his paper interesting to his readers, and in order to emphasize my protest against the irrational and mechanical domination of the night editor I am going to put my foot down strongly, and I shall say this: "My paper has got to be interesting, and possibly in the whole world, so far as we can scour it with our correspondents and reporters, nothing particularly interesting has happened." You say, "What are you going to do then?" Then I shall remember that everything is news to a man who has not heard it before, and I will remember also that to the enormous majority of the newspaper-reading public the most interesting things that ever happened in the world are totally unknown, and, that being so, I shall not hesitate in the least to publish as news, *written up in the very best procurable journalistic style just as if it had arrived hot from the field of battle or from the law courts or anywhere*, the story of events which happened yesterday, a hundred years ago, or a thousand ago, or three thousand years ago, as the case may be. That is to say, I will make free to say that even among intelligent and educated American citizens, who read this issue of *The Tribune*, there are not more

than 20 per cent at the outside who have got a picture before their eyes of that most thrilling of old stories in the drama of the world's history, which began when Xerxes crossed the Hellespont, and which ended with the triumph of Hellas. And supposing any dull season came along in which mankind seemed to have gone stupid and to be doing nothing particular worth recording, I should boldly announce that I proposed to tell the story of the Persian invasion of Greece, from day to day. I would have special correspondents from the seat of war, even if it were necessary to send the best war correspondent I could find to go over the territory traversed by the Persian and Greek armies respectively; and, although you may think it an audacious assertion, I make bold to assert that some day I shall send out an extra edition and keep the presses going all night with a report of the battle of Thermopylæ. At present to people generally it is only a name. I want to make it a thing, a real event, a picture that comes into their daily life; and, what is more, I think it will be done.'

'Will you apply the same principle to sacred history?'

'Most unquestionably; only I shall publish a paper for Sunday reading, not, I need hardly say, on Sunday, but like all our Sunday papers on Friday and Thursday, in order to get it well before the public in all parts of the country before Sunday. In that paper I would make an attempt to do the only thing which, in my opinion, will ever make the life of Jesus of Nazareth a living reality to the mass of our population. That is to say, I would tell the whole story of the founder of our faith, not from the standpoint of one who believed in him but from the standpoint of, say, a special correspondent sent out by some newspaper of Imperial Rome to follow the fortunes of a campaign of King Herod, and who incidentally for reasons of his own has his attention specially called to the Miracle Worker of Nazareth. I think that the correspondent's letters, while they would make many of the orthodox shiver in their shoes because of the realistic fidelity with which they would represent exactly what such a man would say concerning the Wandering Son of the Carpenter, would nevertheless make an ordinary man for the first time understand the immense force of the great argument in favour of the Christian religion which is to be drawn from the mere fact of its having come into existence and conquered the world from such beginnings as it had in Judea. We see the result, and it seems to most of our people the most natural thing in the world that Christ Jesus, being what he was, should have overthrown the whole edifice of pagan Rome; but that is only because we have never for a single moment put ourselves in the position of the Roman courtier or special correspondent to whom the claims of the crucified Galilean seemed about as worthy of the serious attention of serious man as the claims of a religious crank in rhe cane-brakes of Louisiana that he is the latest incarnation of Almighty God.'

By a natural sequence of thought, Stead passed from this subject to the Ober-Ammergau Play and the Drama in general.

'Personally, having been brought up in a Puritan household, I have never been in a theatre in my life excepting at political meetings and at the theatre of the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play. At the same time I saw sufficient of the theatre in Ober-Ammergau, where it is run practically as a department of the church, to see what enormous influence the stage can exert on the culture and education of a community. But between the ideal theatre as it might be and the actual theatre as it is there is a wide gulf. We have no national theatre in England, and so we are going to try to get the *Daily Paper* to bring one into existence in an entirely unique way. I shall get together a committee of the best critics and actors, who will decide what an ideal theatre should be, and we shall there and then proceed to imagine that it has already come into existence, and we shall publish regularly dramatic criticisms, also purely imaginary, of the plays that will be put forward in such a theatre if it did actually exist. By this means we could excite interest in the subject, familiarize the public with what could be actually done by a theatre run on such principles, and in time I think it is quite probable that we might be able to raise by voluntary subscriptions sufficient money to endow and so materialize into existence a theatre which we would, in theosophical phrase, have constructed on the astral plane.'

Here the interviewer asked a leading question about Stead's spiritualistic investigations:

'That reminds me,' said Mr. Stead, 'that I must tell you a remarkable feature in my new paper, a sample of which I hope to be able to send you in a few days; it is publishing for the first time in the world's history an interview between two persons who were separated from each other by a distance of 800 miles, who had no wire or other material means of communication. That is to say, in my sample paper I shall publish an interview with Lady Brooke, who will in a short time, probably, be the Countess of Warwick, on the future of the British aristocracy. When that interview took place I was in a railway carriage at Dover and Lady Brooke was residing with her sister, the Duchess of Sutherland, at Dunrobin Castle, in the extreme north of Scotland, but I interviewed Lady Brooke by my automatic, telepathic hand, without even having to go to the trouble of telegraphing to her or writing to her, or asking for the privilege.'

'How on earth did you accomplish this?'

'I simply took a pencil in my hand, spread a sheet of blank paper on a blotting-pad in the railway carriage, and in thought addressed Lady Brooke the questions which I should have asked her if she had been sitting on the opposite side of the carriage. Then my hand without more ado, wrote out

her answer to each question. Then I asked another question and she answered it, and so on, just as if the two parties, the interviewer and the interviewed, had been face to face in the ordinary journalistic fashion. When the interview was finished I put it in my pocket, and on arriving in London an hour later, I found a letter from Lady Brooke addressed to me, which had arrived that morning. When I opened it I found it contained in brief the substance of the remarks which she had made to me, writing through my hand. When I sent a proof of the interview down to her she returned it without correction or erasure, stating that it was marvellous – the perfect accuracy with which I had tapped her mind and had succeeded in procuring a written record of her thoughts. The only criticism she had to make was that she wished I had added something more – an amplification of what she had already said. This also corresponded with my own impression, having got so sleepy from fatigue in travelling from Switzerland all night that I didn't go on with it.'

'I must say, Mr. Stead, that this opens up a new and bewildering vista of journalistic possibilities.'

'No doubt. I cannot say how far it may go. I do not know how long it will be before many people will write correctly through my hand. Some will not – cannot. Others scarcely ever make a mistake. If I could secure a staff of persons who were in sufficient mental *rapport* with me I would be able to have special correspondence instantaneously from the uttermost parts of the world by the simple process of letting each of them write with my hand. Of course I would never publish at present any telepathic interview procured by automatic writing until I had submitted a proof to the person from whom the writing professed to proceed and found that it was authentic; and that, by the by,' said Mr. Stead, with some vehemence, 'is just exactly what should be done in relation to interviews when conducted in the ordinary way. I think a great security against the abuse of interviewing would be that no interview should be published without giving the person interviewed an opportunity to correct the proof.'

'Don't you think the automatic, telepathic system would be a great nuisance in that you would be likely to be interviewed at any moment upon any subject without your consent being asked?'

'I do not think that you can interview any person without asking his or her consent. I would much rather be interviewed automatically, telepathically, than under the existing system.'

The interviewer wanted to know more about automatic handwriting – what exactly did Stead mean by the word 'automatic':

'I mean that I can at will, when I take my pen in my hand, allow other intelligences than my own to use my hand as their instrument for expressing their thoughts on paper.'

'What are these intelligences?'

'That is a question upon which I do not wish to dogmatize. I know what they profess to be at any rate. Some of them profess to be the individuals who are now living on this earth. Others profess to be individuals who have now no further use for their bodies.'

'But how is it done?'

'I cannot explain. I can only say that it is done, and I can give you the explanation which the intelligences themselves give – namely: that they are able to impress their thought upon my conscious brain, and it sets in motion the nerves and muscles of the hand, but I don't know what I am going to write when my pen begins to write.'

'Does it write sense?'

'Yes, always. I get communications from our living friends and also those which purport to come from friends who have quitted this earth. They are often more useful, because they often contain an element of prophecy. I will mention only one small instance on my visit here. I had arranged to leave Chicago on Thursday. My hand wrote and told me decidedly that I should not leave until Friday. I said: "That is all bosh." Whereupon my hand said: "Don't believe it by any means, only you will see it will happen," and it did happen.'

'Do you think any good will come of it, Mr. Stead?'

'I think this good will come of it. I believe, with Professor Oliver Lodge, that if this study is carefully and systematically prosecuted with the same patience and perseverance that men of science give to the investigation of the black beetle or of a fossil there will be established on the basis of scientific merit the fact that human beings do not cease to exist when they lay aside their bodies any more than they do when they take off their clothes and go to bed. It seems to me that even the offchance of arriving at such a conclusion in the midst of this materalized and sceptical generation would justify me in giving very much more time to the study of the subject than I am able to do at the present time. And then another advantage arising from the study of the subject is the vivid reality which it brings to the Bible story, both in the Old and New Testaments. The great difficulty about the Bible with many people is that it describes a condition of life which in the opinion of the majority of people is no longer in existence, whereas if you would but take pains to ascertain the facts which are lying around your path you would find that apparitions, premonitions, prophecies, and in short the whole of the phenomena usually miscalled the supernatural, are occurring at least as frequently now as they did in the days of the Bible. Another great gain is that it adds enormously to your sense of the wonder of the world and the immense complexity of man's personality. The more I study this subject, the more I am convinced that the segment of man's personality which manifests itself through

the body is but a very small fraction of his real personality. You, for instance, are writing or talking with your body, but another part of you, identical with yourself, may be appearing in double a thousand miles off, while yet another fraction of you may be using some one else's hand to communicate intelligence or to give advice. I am quite sure that these two manifestations of personality are possible without any consciousness on the part of yourself, or what you call yourself, which is only your conscious self. I have more and more come to regard the human body as a kind of two-legged telephone which a fraction of you takes up and uses at birth and which is rung off when the change occurs which we call death.'

# APPENDIX III

## STEAD'S OBSESSION WITH SEX

From a biographer's point of view one of the most interesting things about Stead was the way in which the subject of sex absorbed him. It would be dishonest as well as stupid entirely to ignore this aspect of his personality. Stead himself discussed it freely and frequently both with women and with men, and not always in an absolutely solemn spirit, although he took it so seriously *au fond*. Mr. Robertson Scott, in his contribution to this book (Vol. I, p. 298), goes so far as to say that Stead could be 'Rabelaisian.' [1] That word might mislead, for Stead rarely indulged in Rabelaisian jests, but Rabelais was not more preoccupied with sex than he was. The astonishing thing is that, with such a bent of mind, Stead could remain so consistently virtuous throughout his life. That is the reflection called forth by the following letter from Mr. Havelock Ellis, who says all there is any need to say on the subject. Only the second portion of the letter bears upon the matter immediately in question, but the opening sentences also are so full of interest that I give it in full:

'I am interested to hear that you are writing the biography of Stead; it is a large and fine subject; he was a great journalist, one might almost say a great man, and it is all the better that his life should be writtten by one who can look at him from a little distance, and so perhaps view him more truly. During recent years I have often wished that we had a journalist of his calibre, so honest and so forceful, to deal with the problems which have arisen. At the same time there were few questions on which I entirely agreed with him, and on many I had no sympathy whatever. There was, also, a certain coarseness of texture in his mind which, although I recognized that it was an inevitable part of his great qualities, always rather repelled me.

'In reply to your query, I have written nothing about Stead. I knew him personally, but on one side only. When my "Studies in the Psychology of Sex" were prosecuted in 1898, he became interested in them, and he spoke frankly on the question in the *Review of Reviews*. He would write to me from time to time (sometimes with intervals of years), and now and again would invite me to spend the evening at Smith Square where we would talk in his study till eleven when his daughter would

[1] Some words of Edmund Garrett's in his article in the *Contemporary Review* on Rhodes (already cited) are worth noting here. He says of Rhodes: 'I have heard him say things brutal and cynical – it was an ugly foible – but things gross such as men even of exemplary life often affect in the licence of the smoking-room never.' Stead was quite capable of saying gross things. generally in heat and with indignation, but, on occasion, jestingly also. – F.W.

bring him a cup of tea, which was the sign for me to leave and for him to go to bed. The main subject was always sex. He told me that his friends considered him "mad on sex." He did not dispute that opinion. In his life and actions he was undoubtedly a rigid moral Puritan and his strong self-control kept him in the narrow path. But in his interests and emotions he was anything but a Puritan, and in the absence of that stern self-control he would have been quite a debauched person. The mastery of sexuality was a great problem with him. His repressed sexuality was, I consider, the motive force of many of his activities.'

# APPENDIX IV

In January 1911, Stead celebrated the twenty-first Birthday of the *Review of Reviews*. As in 1900, he wrote to his friends, soliciting expressions of their goodwill, and again the response was swift and generous. Letters of congratulation are apt to be perfunctory and insipid, and they are seldom worth re-reading after the event they commemorate has been forgotten, but many of the things which were written to Stead on this occasion are as interesting now as they were then and demand their place in his biography as weighty documents testifying to the value of his work and to the place he held in the hearts and minds of those who knew him. The examples which I shall give need no further preface.

*From Lord Morley of Blackburn*

DEAR MR. STEAD,

As you began your London career under my flag you may be sure that I have watched it with good-will, and that I very heartily congratulate you on your anniversary. You have in all the intervening time said hundreds of things from which it has been my ill fortune pretty violently to dissent, but this matters little in view of the thousands of things said by you that needed saying. I rejoice to think that your rare vivacity of mind and pen is unimpaired. Your *Review* is marked, as not all public instructors are, by diligent exploration of fact, and it conveys a human voice from a bold and sincere worker. I wish you good luck, and hope to remain what I have been for a generation back, your friend. MORLEY OF B.

*From Lord Esher*

Looking back over the twenty-one years, I can remember no single case in which the *Review of Reviews* has swerved from the lofty standard of religious and imperial duty which was the loadstar of its founder.

Although I have often disagreed with you, I have always felt that it was upon the means rather than the end that we differed.

You ask me for a benediction. What can I say, beyond an expression of fervent belief that the *Review of Reviews* will continue to uphold the doctrines of individual freedom, toleration of all opinions, the peace of the world, and the fusion of the English-speaking race?

*From Lady Aberdeen and Lord Aberdeen*

VICE-REGAL LODGE,
DUBLIN.
*January* 31, 1911.

DEAR MR. STEAD,

I think you can have but few readers who hold a more continuous record as steady adherents to the *Review of Reviews* ever since its first appearance

than Lord Aberdeen and myself. Wherever we have wandered in our journeyings, it has followed us, and wherever we have made our home it has always been a most welcome guest. And we have had peculiar opportunities of appreciating its field of service in countries such as Canada, where men and women of education are living lives of unremitting and heroic labour in far away lonely homes, and who welcome their monthly *Review of Reviews* in a way which we spoilt children of civilization can scarcely imagine, but which should go far to reward the Editor for his devoted toil. . . . The experience of a Canadian Association, which not only sends out periodicals and other literature to settlers and miners, etc., but which makes it a rule that there must be personal letters between the individual senders and recipients twice a year, has brought out this reading-hunger very forcibly, and when we were in Canada, there were never enough *Reviews of Reviews* to meet the demand.

As President of the International Council of Women, I therefore bless you for a double service. Firstly, for enabling thousands upon thousands of persons all over the world to keep in touch with the work and thought of the world's best writers and thinkers, and to have their hunger for books and papers not only fed but increased. What this has meant to countless women practically shut away from all social intercourse whose standards and ideals must necessarily shape those of their families, is beyond words.

And secondly, you have ever consistently upheld every movement for the progress of woman and for uplifting her whether in her individual, social, political, moral or religious life. And in pursuing this attitude you have always sought to inspire in women the sense of the greatness of their responsibility and of the need for the whole-hearted devotion of their lives.

You would neither expect nor wish me to say that we have always agreed with your views and opinions as personally expressed in your *Review*, but even where we have disagreed, you have stimulated us and all your readers to thought, and what could you do more?

Would that we had more citizens possessed of your fearless and generous spirit, and consumed with the desire to succour and to serve!

Your very sincere old friend,

ISHBEL ABERDEEN.

To this Lord Aberdeen added a postscript, as follows:

Success to the comprehensive and courageous *Review of Reviews*: and may the perennial flow of youthful energy and cheerful zest, by which the Editor of Editors is characterized, be abundantly maintained!

ABERDEEN.

*From General Smuts*

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
CAPE TOWN, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

*March* 15, 1911.

DEAR MR. STEAD,

May I congratulate you on the majority of the *Review of Reviews* which I understand was attained last January? In one way and another you have been closely associated with many of the principal actors in the South African drama of the last twenty-one years, and thousands of South Africans appreciate your able and disinterested advocacy of the great cause of South African expansion northwards and of peace and concord among its various races and peoples. Many have differed from you, but I think all have admired the fearlessness and singlemindedness with which you have laboured for the good of South Africa according to your light.

Another great period now lies before United South Africa and I hope before the *Review of Reviews*. That both may have fair seas and soft winds after the storms of the past is the sincere wish of,

Yours sincerely,

J. C. SMUTS.

W. T. Stead, Esq.,
Editor of *Review of Reviews*.

*From J. E. Redmond, M.P.*

DUBLIN.

*January* 26, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. STEAD,

I most heartily congratulate you on the twenty-first Anniversary of the *Review of Reviews*.

During these long years you have been a powerful supporter of the cause of Ireland. You and I have sometimes differed as to policy and method, but I have always regarded you as a man who at heart was a friend of Ireland, and I am rejoiced at this happy opportunity of saying 'I thank you.'

J. E. REDMOND.

W. T. Stead, Esq.

*From General Booth*

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON.

*January* 18, 1911.

DEAR MR. STEAD,

The last twenty-one years have certainly been years of illumination on many of the most profound problems which affect the human race. During

that period you have fought hard and nobly to bring your light to bear on the darkness, and God has helped you.

I venture to predict that amongst other services to the world, the valuable aid which from time to time you have rendered the Salvation Army in its desperate struggle with misery and sin, will add to the honour in which the future will hold your name, and will not fail of its reward here and hereafter.

Let us work while it is day!

Yours affectionately,
WILLIAM BOOTH.

W. T. Stead, Esq.

*From the Bishop of Southwark*

BISHOP'S HOUSE,
KENNINGTON PARK, S.E.
*February* 4, 1911.

How can I refuse altogether such a request at such a time in your history? Especially when I think of some who have gone, Dean Church above all, and Liddon, who never 'gave themselves away' to you, but who honoured your chivalry and in particular were drawn to you like myself by your noble stand in the dark days of the Eastern Question. You have dared for the right: and suffered for the right: you have helped us, with broad sympathy and great knowledge and vivid portraiture, to see the greatness of some of our great men: you have made one feel that if one were so happy as to fight in a minority for an unpopular cause one would probably have your assistance, or at least your respect. These are great things: and I would add to them that when I have admired you least and differed from you most (and I have differed constantly and gravely both as to principles and methods) I have always recognized that what I thought your mistakes came of the nobler things misunderstood, and never from meaner causes.

May GOD give us all more of the Spirit of power, and of love and of 'sobering' to understand one another, discern the signs of the times, and strive together for the things of goodness and GOD against the mighty forces of sin, selfishness, arrogance and materialism!

SOUTHWARK.

*From Alfred R. Wallace*

OLD ORCHARD,
BROADSTONE,
WIMBORNE.
*January* 15, 1911.

DEAR MR. STEAD,

Many thanks for the excellent and appreciative review of my new book you have given in this month's *Review of Reviews*.

After reading the summary of your twenty-one years' work I am very much

pleased to find myself in almost perfect accord with you in every great reform and ideal you have laboured for so strenuously. Like yourself, I am more of an optimist than ever, and our chief difference is that, as regards Social Reform especially, I advocate more fundamental changes than you have ventured on. Though of late years I have not found time to follow your work so closely as I did during the first half of the life of the *Review*, I have always admired your unflinching advocacy of Justice, both at home and abroad, while I have never read more enlightening articles than your long series of 'character-sketches' of the great men of the world.

Sincerely hoping that you may have another twenty-one years of equally beneficial literary work in the cause of human progress, I am glad to be able to sign myself, your admirer and friend,

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

*From Lord Loreburn*

KINGSDOWN,
DEAL.
*January* 14, 1911.

DEAR MR. STEAD,

I congratulate you on the coming of age of the *Review of Reviews*, and heartily wish you continued success.

During the last twenty years I have sometimes differed from you, but never, so far as I remember, upon the great national issues. And it is of immense importance to have thorough independence and plain speaking such as have distinguished your career, uncontrolled by party ties. I hope you will long continue your valuable work.

Believe me, sincerely yours,
LOREBURN.

W. T. Stead, Esq.

*From J. A. Spender*

THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, LTD.,
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET,
LONDON, E.C.
*February* 16, 1911.

MY DEAR STEAD,

It was a great regret to me that absence from England last month prevented me from joining in the tribute which your fellow-journalists paid to you on the twenty-first birthday of the *Review of Reviews*.

Though I am late in the day, I must add one word to express my appreciation of the master journalist who has been an example to his generation not only of brilliant workmanship, but of staunch and unflinching advocacy of principles at all costs. In days when there are many temptations

to regard journalism merely as a branch of commerce, it is good to look back on your career, and to look forward, as I hope and trust, to many years yet, in which you will be at hand as a counsellor and a friend.

May the *Review of Reviews* continue to prosper, and its editor enjoy long life and good health.

Yours ever,

J. A. SPENDER.

*From Rev. Dr. J. Clifford*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Most heartily do I congratulate you on the forty-two volumes of your *Review*.

As one who had the privilege of welcoming the first issue and has read every number since, and always found your record of the Progress of the World the most informing, interesting and stimulating part of the *Review*, I add sincere thanks for the benefit I have received and the incalculable good you have done.

Your leadership has been bold and wise, far-sighted and victorious. Animated by the highest ideals of service to man, you have given your *Review* a foremost place in the journalistic world.

May the next twenty-one years witness the growth of your power, and the widening of the fields of your service.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CLIFFORD.

# APPENDIX V

## ESTIMATES OF W. T. STEAD, BY MRS. FAWCETT, CANON HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND, AND SIR E. T. COOK

*Reprinted from the 'Contemporary Review' for June, 1912.*

### I

All who care for justice to women, and who desire to see the law and its administration make sure that, as far as possible, the world shall be a place of happiness and safety for children, have lost a stalwart friend in the death of W. T. Stead, who went down, on April 16, with the *Titanic*.

I first became aware of a new note in journalism – at any rate in London journalism – in the early eighties. Here was somebody writing with a pen touched with fire about the things that really mattered – clean living, and the protection of children from the deepest of wrongs; and the pen did not give the impression of being guided by sentimentalism: it was evidently wielded by a man who had made a careful study of facts, and was prepared to give battle to defend the right. I do not think I ever heard his name till everybody heard it in 1885, when all London – and, indeed, all the world – rang with the shameless and cruel traffic for immoral purposes in little children, exposed for the first time in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This traffic could have been, and ought to have been, stopped by law; but the Bill dealing adequately with these horrors, though it had been passed more than once through the House of Lords, had been, session after session, talked out, counted out, and blocked out in the House of Commons. It was counted out no more after Mr. Stead carried out his plan of insisting that all the world should know that these devilish things were of common, everyday occurrence in a so-called Christian country. When he undertook his chivalric campaign, the age of consent in Christian England was thirteen; little children of thirteen could therefore legally consent to their own ruin, and no legal redress could be obtained from those who were worse than murderers. Many other offences of the deepest villainy were unrecognized as such by the law, and therefore were liable to no legal punishment. All this was changed by the action Mr. Stead took. He was blamed for his sensationalism, for his want of good taste. But he knew what he was doing, and his training as a journalist told him that in order to rouse the torpid conscience of the House of Commons, shock tactics were necessary. I remember well his personal description of how he had been worked up to take the action which he did take. As a young man he had been greatly influenced by Mrs. Josephine Butler, and her great crusade against the immoral Contagious Diseases Act. It was Mrs. Josephine Butler who came to him with her heart-rending story, drawn from facts in her own experience, of the sale and purchase of young children in

London for the purposes of immorality. Stead felt her message as a call for personal service. 'Whereupon, Oh King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly vision,' he might have said – the Heavenly vision of trying to get God's will done on earth as it is in Heaven. But though he was full of the spirit which leads to personal service, he was careful and cautious in regard to facts. He felt he must make the groundwork of positive knowledge firm beneath his feet. He went, therefore, with his story, Mrs. Butler's story, to Sir Howard Vincent, then Head of the Criminal Investigation Department. 'Just tell me,' he said, 'are such things possible?' The reply was: 'They are not only possible, they are of common occurrence.' Stead broke in, 'It ought to rouse hell,' and Sir Howard rejoined, 'It does not even rouse the neighbours.' Stead determined it should rouse the neighbours and the whole country, and through them the miserable indifference of the House of Commons to villainy which was contaminating the life-blood of the nation at its source. He made a plan for the fictitious, but apparently real, sale of a child, safeguarding himself and her at every stage by the presence of trustworthy witnesses of his *bona fides*. He also took into his confidence beforehand the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Manning, and other high ecclesiastics. He then spread broadcast in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of which he was the editor, the whole story. He accomplished what he set out to accomplish. The House of Commons boggled no more over the Criminal Law Amendment Bill: there were no more counts out and talks out of that long-delayed measure. The sons of Belial did what they could in the House to minimize its stringency, but they were no longer masters of the situation, and the Act which was finally passed was an enormous improvement on anything which up to that time had found a place in the statute book.

The enemy furiously raged together, and going over the whole of Stead's story told by himself with the utmost circumstance and publicity, discovered a joint in his armour of precautions, and that he had actually, in his crusade, committed a technical breach of the law. A grateful country sentenced him to three months' imprisonment as an ordinary criminal. But he was almost immediately made a first-class misdemeanant, and went on editing the *Pall Mall Gazette* from his cell in Holloway.

The effect of his heroic action did not cease with the passing of the Act. Many good men and women, foremost among them Mr. and Mrs. Percy Bunting, determined that the deep feeling which had been aroused should have a permanent expression. The National Vigilance Association was formed with Mr. W. A. Coote as Secretary. Its object was to see that the new law was set in motion, and to secure further improvements and developments in it. The International work now going forward with the object of preventing the White Slave Traffic is due to the National Vigilance Association, and thus indirectly, to W. T. Stead. The House of

Commons shows its old indifference and supineness in relation to this great work: the Bill has been put up for second reading by the Member in charge of it again and again. It is always blocked. The Government, while expressing entire approval of it, declines to take it up: it needs behind it the electoral force which it would receive if women had votes. No one was more clear on this point than Mr. Stead: he constantly recurred to it. The last time I saw him was on March 28. I was, with other women, walking up and down the pavement outside the House of Commons while the men inside were killing the Conciliation Bill. We exchanged a friendly greeting, and I well knew that with his whole heart and strength he wished us well.

It is pleasant to read what everyone is saying of him now: that to him death was but the passage from one room to another of his Father's house; that it was quite certain that he would be among the last to leave the ship, that among the tragic uncertainties of this tragic event there was, at any rate, one positive certainty, and that was that he would never seek his own safety at the cost of others, but would die, as he had lived, heroically. No one pretends that he was faultless; but he had a great and generous heart, a boundless and intense vitality, and the spontaneous desire everywhere and always to protect and cherish the weak. We may be thankful for his life, 'We are a nation yet,' as long as we can breed such men as he was.

MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT.

II

It added a strange thrill to the horror of the ocean-agony to hear that W. T. Stead had gone down to his death in the silent depths of those icy waters. Such an end became him. He belonged to the sudden and supreme hours, when all that man has is at stake. He understood the vehement, the spasmodic. He was at home in heroic moments of storm and stress, in the daring ventures of the human spirit. He would show himself in all his nobility of soul under this tremendous proof; and no one who knew him could doubt how his tenderness might have spent itself in the service of women and children. 'Splendid action on the edge of life.' How he would have loved James Mozley's famous phrase! His soul would have been aflame to meet the call. If only he could have told us, as no other could tell, the story of the awful night, and have flung out, into burning words, the tragic irony of such a close to that stupendous toy which man's power and pride had fashioned for his pleasure!

He was a most lovable man. He had something of the child about him, which drew and endeared. I recall the old days of Bulgarian atrocities, in which he and Liddon struck up their surprising friendship. I think of his confiding to Liddon, on a drive to Dunkeld, that he had learnt more from John Knox than he had ever got out of St. Paul. 'Indeed, dear

friend: that, I confess, has not been my own experience,' came the answer in Liddon's softest tones.

Then the storm of the 'Maiden Tribute' burst. I had been warned by a short visit from Josephine Butler, with her grey, sorrow-stricken, beautiful face, to be ready for some tremendous shock. So I was able to understand and to recognize the dauntless and devoted courage of the man and to rely absolutely on his spirit of self-sacrifice, however perilous his methods. Later on, I had the help and joy of acting with him over the Eastern Crisis and Armenian Massacres.

The note of everything about him lay in his moral impetuosity. It carried all along. There was no power on earth that could check, or damp, or repress it. It had the invincible confidence of inspiration in it. It stormed its way through. And, then, it had at its service an intelligence that knew no reserves, and accepted no repression, and revelled in largeness of scope, and in audacities of venture, and in swiftness of action, and in defiant concentration of all its power upon the immediate purpose.

Never was a man so magnificently equipped for delivering the direct blow that would tell decisively. He knew exactly what to lay his hands upon, to serve the need of the hour. He could work up any amount of material, at a moment's notice, into some amazingly effective form. The whole man went into it, at full speed, with every nerve strung and alert. He took the whole world into his purview; nothing was too big: nothing daunted. Everybody and everything could be put to use for the purposes of his fluent advocacy. These were the times at which all his wonderful capacity came out.

He lay outside conventional movements, and was singularly detached from the normal currents of political influence. He did not belong to anybody. Rather, he broke out in splendid spasms. And no one could foresee where and what his occasions would be. He had a liking for going direct to the central spot, and dealing with it straight, e.g., to the Pope, or the Tsar, or Cecil Rhodes, or the Sultan. His impetuosity gave us shocks and surprises. It swept us into the irretrievable disaster of sending Gordon to the Sudan. But it was always noble, and heroic. It always had a touch of spiritual simplicity in it. It had a prophetic force about it, which cleaned out the dull channels of our sodden lives, and purged our hearts of their dulness and timidity. He did us good, even when he blundered. He stirred the true blood in us, and woke the spirit from its sloth. We became aware of the high calls of faith, and the risks that heroism must ever run, and of the sacrifices that the good cause will ask for to the end. He might be rash: he might be violent: he might be one-sided. When once stirred, he could not help bringing into play the perilous gifts that made him the most vivid and brilliant journalist in England. But he was never stirred but by great motives. He was always prepared to spend himself and to be spent for the

highest that he saw or knew. He held nothing back, when he gave himself away. Spiritual convictions were paramount over him. He lived, and was ever ready to die, for the truth as he believed it, and for the God whom he served.

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND.

III

I remember once asking an eminent man of wide experience who was the cleverest person he had ever met. 'In sheer intellectual ability,' he replied, 'I have never met anyone who surpassed our friend Stead.' This is an estimate which would, I believe, be endorsed by many who knew that remarkable man in his prime. Not only in intellectual energy and quickness, but also in strength of will, in driving power, and in force of personality, the Editor successively of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Review of Reviews* had few equals among his contemporaries. He had that combination of gifts, and that touch of genius, which must have achieved distinction in whatever walk of life his lot had been cast. In one only of the qualities which make for practical success was he sometimes deficient; had his judgment been equal to his other faculties, there is no measure of success which he might not in any calling have attained. Journalism was, however, the sphere in which his life's work lay, and in it his influence was deep and wide – far more so than is, perhaps, realized by a younger generation. If the history of modern English journalism should ever adequately be written, Mr. Stead will, I am confident, figure as the most creative and invigorating force in it.

Carlyle pictured the newspaper as the modern Church. 'Look well, thou seest everywhere a new clergy of the Mendicant Orders, some barefooted, some almost barebacked, fashion itself into shape, and teach and preach zealously enough for copper alms and the love of God.' Most people, I suppose, pause before 'and the love of God,' in order to read a sardonic laugh between the lines – as Carlyle, it is likely enough, intended. But the passage as it stands expresses precisely Mr. Stead's conception of journalism and his work in it. Not, indeed, that he was ever very careful about the 'copper alms.' He made, it is true, a financial success, as he well deserved, out of the *Review of Reviews*; but I can conceive that some of those about him would say that such success, though in one sense all the Editor's own, was in other ways attained more in his despite than by his aid. Mr. Stead was of all men the most unworldly, and of editors the least susceptible to the 'business side.' But in another sense he was a consummate master in the art of attracting 'the copper alms.' He knew, that is to say, that a newspaper in order to have influence must be read, and that an editor's first business, therefore, is to make his sheet readable. It must have circulation – not by any means necessarily 'the widest circulation,'

but circulation amongst the people in many different spheres who count for most. This was what Mr. Stead set himself to attract to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, both when he was assistant-editor under Lord Morley, and during his own editorship. He acclimatized the 'interview'; and the way he had with him, assisted by a prodigious memory and literary art, made him supreme in the use of this journalistic form. He developed the 'special article' and the 'signed contribution.' He was the pioneer in daily journalism of maps and other illustrations. Indeed there are few, if any, among laudable features in 'the new journalism' which the historian will not have to trace back to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Budget*, and *Extras* of Mr. Stead's time. The amount of personal initiative in idea and of personal work in execution which Mr. Stead threw into the paper would be incredible if one had not witnessed it. He would think nothing of writing the leading article, half-a-dozen 'Occasional Notes,' a special article or an interview, and a column of 'exclusive information,' all in one day's paper. The personal and confidential talks which lay behind such information were innumerable. The great Delane himself was not acquainted with more important personages, and Mr. Stead's range of curiosity was far wider. In politics Mr. Stead had a footing behind the scenes in both camps. He used to correspond with Lord Salisbury, and even Mr. Stead's deputy had at one time the privilege of almost daily conversations with Lord Randolph Churchill. A story of Mr. Stead's famous audience of the Tsar has been told elsewhere. But there was one great man nearer home whom Mr. Stead failed, after trial, to interview. On his return from one of his visits to Russia the time seemed to have come. Mr. Stead had important messages, and had seen Lord Salisbury and a yet more exalted personage. He informed Mr. Chamberlain to that effect, and begged leave to lay his report before the Minister in person. But Mr. Chamberlain was not even so to be caught, and replied to some such effect as this: that 'as Mr. Stead had already seen the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain feels that he has no right to ask Mr. Stead to call on a subordinate Minister.' Mr. Stead laughed heartily as he recalled the clever letter. It was one of his many engaging personal traits that he told the story of any discomfiture with the same gusto that he brought to the recital of his triumphs. The triumphs were many, the discomfitures few.

Mr. Stead, then, made his *Gazette* and his *Review* interesting and readable. He did this by taking infinite pains, and as the expression of his own inexhaustible vigour and curiosity. No journalist of the time procured so much 'good copy' and none knew better how to present it in a vivid and arresting manner. All this, however, was the 'copper alms' side of the business – the first thing needful in his conception of journalism; but only the first, and not the chief. The essential thing was to 'teach and preach zealously for the love of God.' One or two reminiscences will serve to

bring out this side of Mr. Stead's journalism. I recall as vividly as if it were yesterday a scene in the old room at Northumberland Street around the Editor's table at which Mr. Greenwood, Lord Morley, and Mr. Stead had successively worked. The *Pall Mall* in those days, as some of my readers will remember, was a small sheet, and its front page was wholly consecrated to the leading-article and the beginning of a 'special article.' There was a conference of the powers that were, at which it was proposed, in the interests of the business side, to enlarge the sheet, and to place theatrical advertisements in a first column alongside of the 'leader.' Discussion was long and lively, and in the end Mr. Stead yielded; 'but I warn you,' he added, 'that it may be the ruin of the paper.' I think he underestimated the attraction of his leaders in themselves, and exaggerated the importance of giving them pontifical seclusion; but the tale well illustrates his intense conviction that the day's sermon was the thing. In an account cabled to the *Star* of Mr. Stead's table-talk on board the *Titanic*, he is reported as saying that he had impressed on Mr. Hearst the importance of giving a 'soul' to 'sensational journalism.' By 'a soul' he meant 'a definite moral purpose in some social movement or political reform.' This was the essence of Mr. Stead's own journalism; and at one time he placed in the hands of every member of his staff a copy of 'The Gospel according to the *P.M.G.*' – 'a rough outline,' he explained, 'scribbled off at such fragmentary hours as were available after my return from the office, of the things which are more surely received among us.'

Mr. Stead did not take amiss any harmless liberty on the part of his subordinates and an otherwise trivial sequel may be recounted to illustrate the relations between the editor and his staff. A few days later a letter arrived from a reader, beginning: 'Sir, – You have ruined your paper. Henceforth I shall buy only the *St. James's Gazette*.' And then Mr. Stead's subordinate, who had opened the letter, paused, as if that were all. 'Ah,' said Mr. Stead, 'did I not tell them all so?' But tragedy passed into comedy, as the subordinate continued to read: 'The *St. James's Gazette* is now the only paper left of a convenient size for wrapping one's shoes in.' Mr. Stead enjoyed the pleasantry as heartily as anyone else.

'The Gospel according to the *P.M.G.*,' as preached by Mr. Stead, has had great and far-reaching influence. This is a country governed by public opinion, and Mr. Stead was a potent moulder of public opinion in the political and social sphere. His work in the cause of womanhood is, I understand, discussed elsewhere in this *Review*, and this was the work which he considered his greatest. In the field of politics Mr. Stead was the most powerful of the journalists who contributed to form and maintain public opinion on the side of a strong Navy. He was among the first, and was easily the most persistent, in advocating a good understanding with Russia. He was one of the pioneers in familiarizing the ideas roughly

expressed in the phrase "Imperial Federation." He was a constant advocate of Anglo-American friendship, and the later years of his life were largely devoted to the cause of International Arbitration. But his influence was widest in a sphere which is less palpable and which less touches particular problems of specific solutions. He was profoundly religious, and his beliefs became more and more touched with mysticism; but the practical gospel, for which those beliefs gave sanction, was the service of man as the service of God. It is impossible to write anything about Mr. Stead without quoting the poet whose words were most often in his mouth and at the point of his pen. He took his marching orders from Lowell: –

'He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest 'neath the all beholding sun.'

The gospel of social service, the politics of social betterment, were what was nearest to his heart. And here he greatly widened his influence by personal intercourse and exhortation. He was not satisfied with preaching only in his paper or his review. He was as instant on the platform and in the chapel as in the printed page. One cannot measure such things precisely; but it cannot be doubted that his persistency of preaching in the Press, his *Link* ('A Journal for the Servants of Man') his 'Association of Helpers,' and his personal influence with individuals, have exercised a very powerful force. And, besides, he practised what he preached – not always, it may be, with judicious discrimination, but always with a self-denying generosity. As has been said of him elsewhere, 'it was enough in a man and a woman to be unfortunate, for Mr. Stead to befriend them.'

As I close these remarks, a letter reaches me, in which a friend of his recites a recent conversation. 'When my work is done,' he said, 'I shall die a violent death.' 'How do you know?' 'I cannot tell; but I have had a vision, and I know that it will be true, as surely as that I am talking to you.' It is unlikely that we shall ever be told how he died; but those who knew him will be in no doubt. He must have faced his doom unflinchingly; for he knew no fear, and he did not believe that death meant separation. And, if occasion arose, he must have comforted any weaker brother within his reach. It was what he was doing all his life.

E. T. COOK.

# APPENDIX VI

## THE STEAD MEMORIALS IN LONDON AND NEW YORK

*From the 'Daily Telegraph' of July 6, 1920*

At the unveiling of a portrait bronze, erected by British and American journalists to commemorate William Thomas Stead, on Thames Embankment yesterday, tributes were paid to his memory in the presence of members of his family and admirers of his journalistic labours. The memorial was the work of Sir George Frampton, and the ceremony of unveiling by Mr. J. A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, was brief owing to unfavourable weather. Yesterday was the anniversary of Mr. Stead's birth, and the unveiling synchronized with a similar ceremony in New York. The inscription was as follows:

W. T. STEAD,

1849. 1912.

This Memorial to a Journalist of wide renown was erected near the spot where he worked for more than thirty years by journalists of many lands, in recognition of his brilliant gifts, fervent spirit, and untiring devotion to the service of his fellow-men.

After the unveiling the assembly proceeded to the London County Council Education Office, where Mr. Robert Donald, chairman of the British Committee, who presided, read letters of regret for absence from Viscount Morley and Lord Fisher, both of which messages appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* yesterday. He also read a letter from Viscount Northcliffe which included the following:

It was my great fortune to know Stead from many angles. A mighty affectionate creature he was, especially to young men, and to those he loved to criticize, of whom I was one. An aspect of his character that I have not seen referred to was his wonderful general knowledge. He and I spent a day in parts of Roman Britain – Silchester, among other places – and packed away in that great brain of his was a vast store of knowledge of the early history of England. How much he did to relieve the tedium of the dull evening newspapers of the early 'eighties was but part of a great revolution which he effected in journalism. When he passed so mysteriously I was one of many who felt that they had lost a true friend.

### SINCERE, JUST, IMPARTIAL

Mr. Donald also read a letter from the American Ambassador paying tribute to the memory of Mr. Stead, and one from Mr. H. Wickham Steed,

editor of the *Times*, who was to have unveiled the memorial. Mr. Steed wrote as follows:

MY DEAR DONALD,

I am grieved not to be able to unveil the tablet to our old friend and colleague, W. T. Stead, next Monday, when I shall unfortunately be away from England, without any chance of even using, as he would have loved to do, the wireless telephone. I had looked forward to this opportunity of paying some tribute to his memory, both as a man and as a journalist, and of bearing witness to the degree in which he possessed the two qualities which lift the exercise of our craft above a level that might otherwise seem sordid – a burning sincerity and a passion for justice. This I can say with full impartiality, since I do not remember having been in complete agreement with him on any single question; but neither did I ever detect in him the slightest taint of self-interest other than the self-interest of which we are all guilty when we are striving for the victory of causes which we believe to be right.

Of his achievements as a writer and an editor it is not for me to speak. Others who were directly associated with him in his daily work have qualifications in this respect which I cannot claim. But I have always owed him a debt of gratitude for the advice he gave me almost exactly thirty years ago, when, as a youth eager to enter journalism, I saw him for the first time in his 'sanctum' overlooking the spot where you will gather on Monday. I remember his words as if they had been spoken yesterday, and repeat them here, as they may perchance be of interest, if not of value, to other aspirants to membership of the daily Press. 'A journalist!' he exclaimed, 'how can I know whether you are fit to be a journalist? There is only one way to find out. Try; if you have anything to say that you feel you must say, why, say it, and send it to some editor, who will probably send it back. Don't waste time over mere phrases. Sail right into the heart of your subject at once. When you have written your masterpiece, imagine that you have to telegraph it to Australia at your own expense, and cut out every superfluous word—above all, the adjectives. Then, if anything remains, try it on an editor, and see what happens. If you do not succeed, as you won't unless you have really got something to say that you cannot help saying, try again and again. Presently you will find out whether you are fit to be a journalist or not.'

Strange to say, this advice encouraged me greatly, for I was convinced that I had something to say, and that it was the duty of editors to print that something. Presently some of them did, the first being the late Sir E. T. Cook, who printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* a short account that I remember writing on a waiting-room table at Liverpool Street Station, of a lecture on old age pensions given by Mr. J. A. Spender at Toynbee Hall,

with the late Charles Booth in the chair. Afterwards, when studying in Germany and in France, the *Westminster Gazette* was very kind to me, and really gave me my start in journalism – which I have always felt I owed to Stead's advice.

We surely do well to commemorate our great men, and Stead had an unquestionable title to greatness in our craft. Erratic and even fantastic as were some of his ideas and enterprises, they were all marked by a touch of genius and by childlike good faith. He refused to be abashed by disappointments. To the end he believed the best of everybody and everything. He had a faculty for ignoring obstacles that sometimes, though by no means always, helped him to overcome them. His mind was of an absolute sort; not given to subtlety, nor always appreciating the relative value of some general principles; but, above all, he was a real man, responding to every thrill of human nature, overflowing with sympathy, commanding devotion, because himself devoted to others, and ever ready to laugh, without malice or rancour, at his own disappointments and failures. Your committee has been well-inspired in erecting a permanent memorial to his work, for, rightly understood, it will remain an inspiration to those who knew him and it, and to those who may come after him and us. – Believe me, my dear Donald, very sincerely yours.

WICKHAM STEED.

### MASTER OF HIS CRAFT

Mr. Spender said Stead was a master of his craft, with daring and original ideas, and he loved journalism and left a permanent mark on it. Coming on the scene at a time when it was in danger of being entangled in its own traditions, he broke its bonds and enlarged its sphere to embrace a great new range of human interests and emotions. He brought to his work an overflowing vitality, a limitless curiosity, a vehement crusading temperament, a positive preference for shocking, and even scandalizing, the inert multitude, provided only he could make it think. For pointed and animated writing, for the discovery of the human interest which lurked in the heart of the most forbidding subjects, for arresting phrases and unflagging vivacity in what other people thought to be dull times, Stead was unequalled among his contemporaries, and has not been approached by many of his successors. But journalism with Stead was no mere craftsmanship. His great journalistic qualities were the qualities of a mind full to overflowing of honest emotion and conviction, a mind to which journalism was always a means and not an end. No one would have repudiated more scornfully the idea that journalism was a mere branch of commerce.

Again and again he staked his whole fortune and career on forlorn and unpopular causes. And when his impetuous disposition and warm chivalry for man and woman brought him into conflict with worldly opinion and

authority, he never resented any criticism but one, which was that he had done what he had done in order to sell his paper. It was well that journalists should have combined to do honour to such a man. He was one of the masters of their calling, and an example to them of high faith, courage, and integrity in pursuing it. Not journalists alone, however, but all Englishmen had cause to cherish his memory. He had passionate quarrels with some of them at different times, and he stubbornly refused to conform to any school of thought or policy. He was Imperialistic and pro-Boer, ardent champion of peace and arbitration, indefatigable advocate of the big Navy. These seeming inconsistencies were bound together in his own mind by a clear train of thought which based the safety and welfare of these dominions upon its honour. Those who knew him intimately remember not only these public characteristics but the warm-hearted, generous man, whose door was never closed to any petitioner, however humble, who gave of himself unstintedly day by day for his fellow man. Those who knew him rejoice that his name should be honoured and his memory kept green by this memorial, raised to him where he would have most desired it, by his fellow journalists.

Among those present were: The Rev. Herbert Stead, Dr. J. E. Stead, Mr. John Stead, Miss E. W. Stead, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Gilliland, Viscount Milner, the Hon. J. McEwan Hunter, Sir Harry Brittain, M.P., Sir Alfred Robbins, Sir George Sutton, Sir George Frampton, Sir Horace B. Marshall, Mr. George Springfield, Sir John Coode-Adams, Mr. Herbert Cornish, the Dean of Durham, Mr. John Burns, Dr. Drakoules, the Rev. Dr. M. J. Elliott, Mr. Arnold White, Mr. Grant Richards, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, Mr. Arthur Mee, Dr. Ellis Powell, Mr. G. B. Hodgson, Mr. Arthur Walter, Mr. T. H. Harley, Mr. T. O'Donovan, Mr. F. Hinde, Mr. F. J. Higginbottom, and Mr. William Hill (hon. secretary of the British Committee).

* * *

Lord Fisher, in expressing his regret at being unable to attend the unveiling, has written as follows: 'Stead was a consummate journalist – he was an honest man – and (thank God) he possessed the "insanity of genius" which will hand him down to posterity as "a famous man." He was a lover of his country, and, like John the Baptist, he "constantly spoke the truth, rebuked vice, and patiently endured for the truth's sake!" '

* * *

Viscount Morley, who was invited to be present at the unveiling of the memorial to the late W. T. Stead on the Thames Embankment to-day, has sent the following letter to Mr. Wickham Steed, editor of the *Times*, who will perform the ceremony: 'I wish with all my heart that I could be by your side at the commemoration of our friend Stead. It was my fortune many years ago to bring him up from the North to the field of metropolitan

journalism. He rapidly made a high personal mark and greatly magnified and exalted the sphere of his profession. He proved himself a colleague as faithful as he was active, painstaking, and original. Without disrespect to the many able and conscientious journalists of modern generations, it may with truth, I think, be said of him that he was surpassed by none of them in any country in his sense of the commanding duties and responsibilities of the mission of the newspaper Press. His temperament was eager, but he had a passion for being right, and to be right in facts and information was with him, as it ought to be for all of us, the foundation of serviceable opinion and popular instruction. You are celebrating the memory of one who was an important new force in his day; the errors of such a man have long fallen out of account.'

* * *

*From the 'Daily Telegraph' of July* 6, 1920

## AMERICAN MEMORIAL

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

NEW YORK, Monday. – Mr. Melville Stone, the doyen of American journalists and head of the Associated Press of the United States, issued a statement to-day on behalf of the American Stead Memorial Committee, in which he expressed the complete agreement of the committee with the steps taken in London to-day to honour the memory of the late William Stead. Mr. Percy Bullen, secretary of the committee, reported that a replica of the Frampton bronze bust had been safely received in New York, and a fitting site for the same at the entrance to the Central Park, New York, had been approved by the city, but the date of the unveiling could not be fixed until the completion of the mural setting by the masons to the satisfaction of the park authorities. It is hoped that the unveiling of the replica may coincide with the first visit to New York of President Wilson since his illness, and in this case a date convenient to the national executive would be arranged. The American committee includes a dozen leading newspaper editors in the United States, several of whom, like Mr. Stone, were for many years the personal friends of Mr. Stead and supporters of the gallant fight which he made in the cause of the world's peace. Funds for the purchase of the replica in 1914 were subscribed on this side within a few days, but on the day that the New York Art Commission formally approved the acceptance of the bust the war broke out, and further proceedings in connection with the formal inauguration were postponed until peace was concluded.

# APPENDIX VII

## A WREATH

*It seems fitting to devote the last page of Stead's biography to these lines, written by a friend for whose work he had a warm admiration.*

### W. T. STEAD

['He has gone down into the great waters.' – A. G. G. in the *Daily News*.]

Yes! as he lived he died; a voyager
  Adventurous ever, on great deeps and strange,
Whence new isles dawn and where the wide winds stir,
  Freighted with fate and change.

His was the heart of gold whose argosy
  No ships on all the sea of life could match,
Whose wealth all shared; whose door to each man free
  Was ever on the latch.

Kindness that knew nor end nor bound; the power
  Thundering its way to thrones; the gentleness
That stooped to lift and cheer one wayside flower,
  One fainting life to bless.

Great heart, intrepid soul, majestic brain,
  To these, to-day, is many a tribute penned.
My wreath is woven of love and wet with pain –
  I mourn the man, my friend.

S. GERTRUDE FORD.

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